Engaging men in gender equality

How social interventions for disadvantaged men in the Netherlands impact on gender+ equality

Iris van Huis

ENGAGING MEN IN GENDER EQUALITY

How social interventions for disadvantaged men in the Netherlands impact on gender+ equality

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When we think of achieving gender equality, we often think about the role women play in this process. However, men can be seen as "gatekeepers" of gender equality, as men in many ways constrain opportunities for women (Connell 2005b). This would argue for the need for men to be involved in gender equality issues and for them to give up some of their privilege (ibid.). Of course, men differ greatly in the way they are privileged, equal, or disadvantaged, both compared to women and amongst themselves (Connell 2005a). Not only are men too constrained by rigid norms on masculinity, they can also occupy contradictory positions on inequality axes; as men they may be privileged, but they can still be disadvantaged in other ways. Studying disadvantaged men and the way social interventions try to involve these men in gender equality issues, helps to understand contradictory social-inequality patterns as well as discern possibilities (and struggles) for directed change. In this dissertation I therefore study how social interventions that target working-class men with mostly migrant backgrounds try to involve men in gender equality issues and how these interventions impact on (gender) inequality and other inequality dimensions.

The social interventions studied here are so-called "male emancipation" projects in the Netherlands that institutions in the field of social work and civil society organize as group interventions. These projects were aimed at "socially isolated" migrant and non-migrant men with low education levels. The projects were all part of a funding program that aimed to let these men "participate" more in society, and to "emancipate" them in the sense of letting them reflect on gender equality issues and their role as men in the family. I analysed how inequalities were part of the way the professionals involved understood the lives of these men, how these interventions impacted on different inequality dimensions, and how participants experienced that impact. Unveiling these often hidden inequalities and the impact these interventions had on them was a way to look beyond the way interventions themselves framed problems and solutions – though this framing is also part of the analysis. Unveiling the different inequality dimensions was necessary to understand the power/inequality processes within the interventions and within the lives of participating men.

My study of social interventions and their impact on inequality builds on the work of other scholars, while addressing several theoretical challenges. The challenges the research addresses are: How can we understand intersectional inequalities? How can we apprehend the gendered inequalities to which disadvantaged men are subjected? And how can we understand and value the impact of social interventions? Based on empirical research and perspectives from the fields of gender studies, studies on migration, citizenship, and belonging, masculinities studies, and Foucault's work on subjectification, I hope to contribute to answers to these theoretical questions.

For the first challenge - how to understand intersectional inequalities - I use insights from gender studies that have also gained ground in the social sciences. In social-science scholarship,

gender equality is increasingly seen as an issue that does not stand on its own, but should be seen along with its intersections with other dimensions of inequality (McCall 2005: 1771; Anthias 2013: 3). Aside from intersectionality theory, I use the closely related concept of gender+ (in)equality (Krizsan & Lombardo 2013: 89), which argues that gender equality should be seen in combination with other (in)equality dimensions depending on the empirical context. In addition to this intersectional gender+ perspective, I also examine gender+ (in)equality dynamically using Yuval-Davis' multi-facetted take on belonging (2011). The specific facets of inequality that I distinguish based on her work are: 1) social locations, 2) identities and emotions, and 3) social norms. This multi-facetted conceptualization helps to reveal whether and how actual possibilities, constraints, and practices are impacted (social locations), whether and how identities and emotions are influenced, and whether and how men's norms are affected, including how this effect is embedded within dominant discourses.

As studies of gender equality mostly focus on women, a study on the way men are involved in (in)equality issues offers new insights both for gender studies and for the study of social inequalities. This represents this study's second theoretical challenge: How can we understand the gendered inequalities of disadvantaged men? To better understand the implications of targeting men in interventions aimed at gender+ equality, I have drawn on masculinity studies. Also known as masculinities studies or critical masculinities studies, this field offers an approach that takes into account intersecting inequalities, including combinations of disadvantage and privilege (Connell 2005a; Coston & Kimmel 2012; Cooper 2005-2006; Sinatti 2014). However, even within masculinity studies there are few studies on social interventions that aim to involve men in gender+ equality (exceptions are: Verma *et al.* 2006; Esplen 2006; Flood & Howson eds. 2015; Edström *et al.* 2015; Robb *et al.* 2015). My study of social interventions therefore aims to understand possibilities to make changes in gender+ equality in deliberate ways while focussing on men.

As a third challenge, I try to grasp how we can further understand and value the impact of social interventions in a way that acknowledges both existing inequalities as well as power dynamics in the deliberate attempts to change them. I will analyse the intended impact of interventions – as inspired by Critical Frame Analysis (Verloo 2005; 2007; Verloo & Lombardo 2007), and also study unintended impact (on multi-facetted gender+ inequality), in an open and critical way using an "informed grounded theory" approach. This means that theoretical findings on social interventions are grounded in (or emerge or are constructed from) the research data (Charmaz 2006; 2008; Glaser & Strauss 1967), while they are at the same time informed by theory. The main theory used to value the impact of the studied interventions is Foucault's theory on subjectification (Foucault 1975/1991; 1976/1998). Foucault's theory articulates how people are subjected to activities of power but can also be active agents within relationships of power. His work helps to address the challenge of valuing the impact of social interventions, as it takes into account how power relations function in interventions that aim to change multiple inequalities. Foucault's work allows for the study of domination as well as the study of possible resistance against domination. However, Foucault's work on agency and possibilities of resistance is undertheorized and less empirically grounded than his work on discipline and normalization (Crossley 1996; Fraser 1989: 272, 279; Kelly 2013: 89; McNay 1992: 38).

In the next theoretical section I will elaborate on these theoretical challenges and show how my theoretical perspectives and methodological considerations led to the research questions and the design of this study.

1.1 THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL INTERVENTIONS; BUILDING THEORETICALLY INFORMED RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To understand (intersectional) inequality, the first theoretical challenge, I can draw on a broad range of social theories. Social inequality, after all, is a classical theme in the social sciences. While most often studies emphasize a single inequality – either social class, ethnicity/race, or gender – feminist theory highlights the importance of an intersectional perspective. In this research I use an intersectional, gender+ approach that builds on Yuval-Davis' theory on belonging and the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis 2006; 2007; 2011). Yuval-Davis' multi-facetted perspective offers an understanding of social inequality that not only highlights social locations/positions, but also includes identities, emotions, and values as part of inequality dimensions. Besides this intersectional multi-facetted perspective, I have incorporated considerations from masculinities studies in order to make the theoretical framework particularly suited to the study of men's inequalities (which is the second challenge mentioned in the introduction).

To understand and value the impact of social interventions (my third theoretical challenge), I use insights from Critical Frame Analysis (Verloo 2005), combining them with a critically informed grounded-theory approach. While Critical Frame Analysis systematically analyses the *intended* impact of interventions, a grounded-theory approach allows for a more open analysis of potential *unintended* impact. I have formulated methodological considerations on how to study social interventions in an "open" way, while still allowing for relevant social theories to inform the analysis. This analysis is also informed by Foucault's theory on subjectification, which will help critically assess power positionings within interventions that attempt to change dimensions of inequality.

1.1.1 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER+ (IN)EQUALITY AND FACETS OF INEQUALITY

Although the term inequality has a strong connotation with disadvantage and marginalization (Verloo 2009: 10), I use the term inequality to describe the full dimensions of (in)equality, including both disadvantaged and privileged positions. I will use the terms privilege and disadvantage to identify on which side of the inequality spectrum one is located. Furthermore, I see gender inequality, or any form of inequality, for that matter, as something that does not stand on its own, since it depends on combinations of inequalities what possibilities and constraints people have in life, how they identify and position themselves on inequality dimensions, and what kinds of norms to which they are expected, or expect others, to conform. The idea that what gender inequality is, does, and means depends on other kinds of inequalities has been laid out in studies on intersectionality. Intersectionality is coined by Crenshaw (1986), but was grounded in earlier work by other black feminists (hooks 1981; 1984/2000; Davis 1981/2011; Lorde 1984) and continues to be important for the study of identities and inequalities, and for

policy analysis (Walby 2011; Anthias 2013; Hankivsky 2014; Verloo 2006; 2013), making it one of gender studies' most important contributions to the social sciences (McCall 2005: 1771; Anthias 2013: 3). As intersectionality is applied in wildly varied ways, it has been called a theory, an approach, an analysis, a tool, a strategy, a method, and an awareness (Hill Collins & Chepp 2013: 2; Goswami, O'Donnovan & Yount 2014: 1). The general advantage of looking at multiple inequalities and their intersections is that it complicates and disentangles understandings of privilege and disadvantage that are often oversimplified as binary and as only concerning one category, or one inequality dimension (only class, only gender). Looking at several dimensions at once de-essentializes seemingly fixed categories by showing that people find themselves in more differentiated categories and by revealing the specific consequences of intersecting inequality dimensions.

In this study I use both the terms intersectionality and gender+ (in)equality, which means that I study gender in combination with other inequalities The term gender+ has been developed in policy research to study the way inequalities and their intersections manifest in policies (Krizsan & Lombardo 2013: 89). The use of the term gender+ indicates that I do not only study gender (in)equality, but also social class and ethnicity and more dimensions of inequality when they are relevant in the field. In that sense, it refers to the same as intersectional inequality, but with more explicit emphasis on gender. The main focus on gender in this research is grounded in my puzzlement over the existence of interventions that involve men in gender equality goals, as these interventions target the privileged positions of men. Trying to engage men in gender equality therefore poses questions about how such interventions operate and how they impact on gender in relation to other dimensions of inequality.

Gender, ethnicity, and class have been identified as the "big three" in intersectional social research (Davis 2011: 9). Some scholars have identified them as such to indicate that these dimensions are overrepresented in studies of intersecting inequalities (Anthias 2013: 4; Dhamoon & Hankivsky 2011: 23). They believe it is not self-evident that these are always the inequalities to study. Instead, it should depend on the studied social context whether these are the dimensions of inequality that are most relevant. In my study, it becomes clear that though professionals and participants of the studied social interventions consider these three dimensions the most important in the way they frame problems and solutions (though not very explicitly), they are not the only relevant dimensions of inequality. Other dimensions of inequality also matter – age, health, disability, sexuality – and will be highlighted as such in the analysis.

This leads me to my central research question, which I will further untangle in the next sections of this chapter:

RQ1 *How do social interventions that target disadvantaged men impact on gender+ (in)equality?*

A multi-facetted perspective on (the intersections of) class, ethnicity, and gender/masculinity

To more specifically identify in which ways social interventions impact on gender+ (in)equality, it is important to understand what it is that is impacted, what intersectional inequality is. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between multiple facets of inequality. Yuval-Davis' theory on belonging, in which she distinguishes three key facets – 1) social locations, 2) identities and emotions, and 3) values –, allows for such a differentiated perspective on inequality.

Although Yuval-Davis uses the term facets of belonging and not of (in)equality, the facets also apply to inequality, offering a differentiated perspective on gender+ inequality. In a slight tweak to her theory, I will use the term social norms rather than values, because social norms are more easily understood as referring to (informal) standards and rules that guide and restrict behaviour in groups and societies, whereas values are generally understood as more abstract conceptions of what is considered important and worthwhile.

I will discuss the three facets separately, explaining how I understand each to relate to the big three inequality dimensions of social class, ethnicity, and gender, the central inequality dimensions in my research. To highlight how gender (in)equality is (also) a relevant dimension in the study of men, I will use insights from masculinities studies in my discussion of the gender dimension.

Social locations

Social locations are the power positions that people are in within the intersecting or overlapping configurations of difference and inequality. These kinds of inequalities can be identified by people's possibilities and constraints as individuals or as collectivities. How do these social locations take the form they have? To explain it simply: From early on in our lives as well as in our later socialization, we are confronted with various societal structures that constitute differences between people and affect the possibilities and constraints we have in our lives. Differences in constraints and possibilities by socialization not only create inequalities between individuals, but also more structural ones along the lines of gender, age, ethnicity, race, class, (dis)ability, sexuality, and many more. Moreover, we are not just confronted with existing categories and inequalities externally and socialized accordingly, we also enact these categories: We "do" gender, ethnicity, and class in practices which make us part of these categories and at the same time reproduce them (West & Zimmerman 1987; Butler 1993; 1997; Goffman 1977), creating our own and other people's possibilities and constraints both materially and discursively. Social locations are, in other words, historically produced through human action, through daily micro-interactions and through meso- and macro-processes in configurations of power. They are therefore not essential or fixed. Social locations are social constructions, and therefore fluid and open to contestation (see: Yuval-Davis 2006: 199). As possibilities and constraints change, social locations do as well. However, although they are social constructions, social locations also have a certain continuity (during a life-time and over the course of generations) and are hard to change in deliberate directions. Some inequalities and differences, moreover, are reproduced by material constraints and resources, and therefore harder to change. Socio-economic class structures, for example, influence our chances in life in economic ways, both through the money or capital we have or do not have, and through (other) symbolic and cultural processes (Bourdieu 1986/2006).

The first of the three major inequality axes, social class, as seen in the context of social location, refers to the analytical distinctions between people arising from differences in their economic and educational possibilities and constraints, combined with symbolic practices that historically have come to be associated with these economic and educational possibilities and constraints. These economic, educational, and symbolic characteristics, in combination with the possibilities and constraints presented by social connections, lead to the perpetuation of class inequalities over the course of generations. This has been pointed out by Bourdieu (1986/2006),

who showed the interconnectedness between economic, social, and cultural capital. Economic possibilities and constraints, moreover, include one's position in a hierarchical economic labour system (or exclusion thereof) (Wacquant 2001), which also concerns a worldwide division of labour in the aftermath of colonialism and therefore transnational inequalities. Furthermore, as one's social class entails different possibilities and constraints for people from different ethnicities, genders, and other dimensions of inequality, its intersections with these should be examined.

Ethnicity, in the context of social locations, entails the differences in possibilities and constraints people have based on an idea of their common or different descent. These are differences on the basis of (perceived) geographical descent, physical characteristics, cultural/religious differences, and a shared history and future (but not necessarily all of these) (Jenkins 2014; Smith 2013). Ethnicity can thus, through differential distribution of resources or through explicit or implicit forms of discrimination, be a basis for inequality. The practice of discriminating disadvantaged ethnicities at the same time offers advantaged positions to people with a privileged ethnicity (depending on the class position, gender, etc.)[1].

In terms of social location, gender is based on ideas about biological differences between people along a masculinity-femininity binary, and the way we are placed and place ourselves within or outside of that gender binary, which affects our possibilities and constraints. As these gender locations (social locations on gender dimensions of inequality) offer the different genders differentiated economic, political, moral/judicial, and physical possibilities and constraints[2], men's social locations generally offer more and different possibilities than those of women (depending on intersections with other inequalities). Gender locations are reproduced through gendered practices, for example in an unequal division of paid and care work. Unequal gender locations are also affected by different power men and women have over their own and other people's bodies, including through the use of violence or by constraining others people's sexualities.

The possibilities and constraints present in gender locations furthermore are affected by the way several inequality dimensions intersect. Intersections with social class, ethnicity, and gender, but also geographical location, legal citizenship, age, and disability all help understand people's possibilities and constraints in their intersections, where these affects when regarded separately would be harder to understand. Masculinity studies use the plural "masculinities" to highlight the fact that gender practices (the male "doing" of gender) come in different forms (Connell 2005a). This means that men's social locations are not only unequal compared to women (in this case predominantly more privileged than women), but it can also be

[1] I have a preference for the term ethnicity over race, although I do use the term racism. As others have explained (Ghorashi 2010; Hondius 2009), in the Dutch context the concept of race is often avoided in common language as well as in the social sciences because of its strong connotation with the misconception that humans can be biologically distinguished into races, which in the past has led to political misuse of the term in attempts to legitimize colonialism, slavery, or genocide. To be clear, the concept of race can be useful in social-science research, especially when addressing racism. To study discrimination that is based on physical appearance, it can be useful to mark the differences people highlight as racism, also when the term race is avoided by the ones who act in racist ways. In the European context, avoidance of the term race and racism might even explain the lack of attention for discrimination/racism (Ghorashi 2010; Hondius 2009).

[2] Connell (2010: 229) indicates gender inequality in: "the state, professions and management", "violence", the division of labour, including paid and domestic work, access to education, and in ending stigma of sexual difference; Walby (2011: 103) distinguishes the need for analysis of gender in the economy, the polity, violence, and civil society; Verloo (2011) adds the domain of knowledge and truth construction.

disadvantaged or privileged compared to other men (who are socio-economically, or because of their ethnic background more or less privileged).

Men, moreover, can experience "costs of masculinity", disadvantages of being men in spite of possible other privileges (Messner 2000). Examples of such costs that are identified in American and Western European society are: not being allowed to be emotional, more experience with physical violence, and shorter lives (Messner 2000; White & Cash 2004). These, however, are not fixed male characteristics, but depend on the local and historical context.

Like Yuval-Davis, I see social locations and identities as separate analytical entities and reserve the term identity for the next facet. This analytical separation is necessary because people's social location also affect people's possibilities regardless from whether or not people identify as someone in their social location. Although social locations and identities cannot be seen as strictly separated, for our understanding of processes of changing inequality it is important to realize that social location and identities are related, but do not always overlap (Yuval-Davis 20011: 7).

Identities and emotions

The second facet of inequality that Yuval-Davis helps illuminate concerns identities and emotions. Identities can be seen as narratives people tell themselves and others about who they are and who they are not (Yuval-Davis 2006: 202; Martin 1995). As emotions, and more specifically feelings of belonging, are an important part of the way identities develop, including how they develop in unequal ways, they are included in this facet of inequality.

Identities not only develop cognitively, but also through feelings of attachment and detachment. In our socialization, we learn that differences between people are attributed specific meanings. We learn to attribute meanings to ourselves as well as to others, a process which can be understood as stemming from a need to understand and categorize ourselves and the world around us (Douglas 1966/2003) and from a psychological need to belong to collectivities (Baumeister & Leary 1995).

Identities are formed through cognitive and emotional reflections on the categories with which people are socialized and other categories with which they are confronted, as well as through people's individual attributes or aspirations. Reflections of these individual attributes and aspirations are often made in relation to pre-existing collectivities (Yuval-Davis 2007: 6). In that sense, there is a combination of active choices and material (including geographical) and other structural situations into which one happens to be born and socialized in, that impact on identities (Giddens 1991: 6).

Because of the reflexive aspect of identity (in the sense of being formed by cognitive and emotional reflections on ourselves and the categories around us), it both stabilizes our idea about ourselves and at the same time ensures that our identity is under constant reconstruction. Identities change and adapt to new situations, especially because social locations and norms change as well.

The processes that form identities thus ensure the continuity of groups, categories, communities, nations, and so on, while at the same time these groups, categories and communities also retain a certain fluidity (Yuval-Davis 2011: 14; Berger & Luckmann 1967). Through the individual formation of our identities, we are part of the reproduction and transformation of collective identities whether we identify with them or articulate them as

different from ourselves (Yuval-Davis 2011: 15). As individual or micro-processes, however, the transformations of people's identities are often micro-changes that hardly result in any structural changes to collective identities, nor in structural patterns and social locations. At most, they can be seen as minor contributions to possible structural change (Connell 2005a: 238).

Besides stabilizing groups and communities, identities, and their accompanying and constituting emotions also help reproduce or transform inequality. To think or feel yourself part of a collectivity can be a political process that reproduces (or reduces) inequality. Some groups can be externally identified as not only different, but also as higher or lower ranked, or as belonging more or less, which affects the emotional attachment of people to a certain community. Identities are therefore unequal by such cognitive and emotional identification processes. More specifically, through stigma, or "spoiled identity" (Goffman 1963/2009), people attach negative stereotypical attributes, names and theories to groups and individuals (ibid.). On the other hand, identity politics can be a way to oppose inequalities, to form stronger identities, or to mobilize them (which can affect social locations positively).

The formation of class identities can include articulating feelings of injustice, which can lead to a wish to resist inequalities, to create so-called insurgent class identities. Alternatively, people can wish to be part of a (usually) higher social class and copy behaviour they see as "higher" or better (Elias 1978/1994; Bourdieu 1986/2006). However, people do not necessarily identify as part of a social class, instead understanding their position vis-à-vis others as the result of their individual merit or failure (Young 1958; Kampen, Elshout & Tonkens 2013: 427). People can also identify with economic, educational, occupational categories without explicitly using the term class, referring to themselves or others as common, poor, rich, educated, posh, and so on (Nayak 2003). People's identities and emotions, in other words, do not always coincide with their social locations. People can also overlook their class locations (locations on socio-economic dimensions of inequality), even though these locations do structure their lives. This non-identification with social locations can occur for privileged as well as disadvantaged social locations (Spivak 1988; McIntosh 1988; 1988/2003; Kimmel 1993).

The same goes for ethnicity, which can be a strong ground for identification, especially when these identities are politicized or when others repetitively ascribe these identities. Where it concerns the majority ethnicity, such an identification can be weak, as this ethnic classification is seen as the norm and therefore not something to reflect upon. Moreover, people can have multiple ethnic identities, or combinations of ethnic and national identities (Baumann 1996; Anderson 1991; Brubaker, Loveman & Stamatov 2004; Geschiere 2009; Jenkins 2014).

Though gender can form a strong basis for one's identity, it can also be self-evident and therefore less important. Judith Butler states that not being part of a gender or sexual identity can be highly threatening, which results in identities mostly being structured within existing categories (1993: 3). She calls the spaces outside of these categories "zones of uninhabitability" or "domains of abjection" (Butler 1993). However, as identities are fluid (just as social locations and norms), these zones can shift as well. Moreover, people can construct subversive identities (Butler 1993).

Just as with class and ethnicity, being a man and therefore part of a (theoretically) advantaged gender majority can lead to a less strong gender identity: "Woman alone seems to have 'gender' since the category itself is defined as that aspect of social relations based on difference between the sexes in which the standard has always been man," Laqueur writes (1992: 22; Kimmel 1993). Yet, masculinity scholars have also indicated that masculinity can be a fragile

identity that constantly needs to be reassured, also where people from privileged social classes are concerned (Knights & Tullberg 2011: 389; Dolan 2011). Men's masculinity or masculine identity is ever in danger of being questioned, both by the men themselves and by others, within hierarchal relations in which men with more power are identified as more masculine than the ones with little power, who are emasculated or can be identified as effeminate. As power is relational and situational, this (theoretical) relation of masculine identity with power can result in men at the top of a hierarchy being afraid of losing power for fear of losing their masculine identity, and these men therefore doing what they can to retain their power. This fragile identity adds to the "costs of masculinity" mentioned earlier, but it can cause even more disadvantages for others (of any gender) when they are harmed whilst trying to prove their masculine identity (Knights & Tullberg 2011). Such oppressive behaviour is furthermore hard to change when there is little (discursive) consciousness of the gendered dimension or of the relation between oppressive behaviour and male identity. Disadvantaged men can thus feel like they need to prove their masculine identity by asserting their power, while at the same time not seeing themselves as privileged compared to women, because male identity is the standard.

According to Coston and Kimmel, disadvantaged men reduce, neutralize, or resist problematizations of their masculinity with strategies that let them regain access to their male privilege. With reference to Goffman, they see the following responses to stigma (or "spoiled" identity): adhering to external stereotypes ("minstrelization"), minimizing difference with dominant groups ("normification" or "passing"), and maximizing differences with dominant groups to the extent in which the stigmatized group can identify as "better" than the dominant group ("militant chauvinism") (Goffman 1963: 108-114; Coston & Kimmel 2012).

Responses to stigma thus affect one's self-identification (and behaviour), as well as identities and social locations of other people. Cooper states that advantaged (male) identity in intersections with disadvantaged identity (or identities) can be compensated for by subordinating others. Men's frustrations are thus deflected onto others, instead of on the people subordinating these men (Cooper 2006: 867, referring to Ehrenreich 2002). Cooper also states that such an intersectional framework for men should not be an excuse for the subordinating practices of disadvantaged men (2006: 868).

In conclusion, identities and emotions form a facet of inequality that highlight the ways in which people see and feel themselves and others as attached to, or detached from, collectivities, as higher and lower than others and more or less included. These can be but are not necessarily related to their social locations.

Social norms and dominant discourses

The third facet of inequality that Yuval-Davis helps illuminate consists of social norms. Social norms formulate which behaviours, thoughts, and feelings are considered standard, preferable, or admirable, and which are restricted or sanctioned. Social norms form a facet of inequality because they restrict some more than others and enable some more than others. Social norms are found on the micro-level, as well as on meso-institutional levels and in macro-representations of acceptable behaviour in dominant discourses.

On the individual or micro-level, we can experience and/or exert pressure to behave in a certain way (which can also be experienced as guidance). This pressure is exerted in our every

day socialization within relations of power, but also through active choices in which we decide what kinds of behaviour we find important. Furthermore, we often behave certain ways according to social norms without actively thinking about it. In Bourdieu's terms, people form "dispositions": tendencies to act, think, or feel, and this includes a tendency to judge situations in certain ways, which we form and embody in the context of social structures (Wacquant 2011: 85; Bourdieu 1986/2006). These dispositions can be seen as part of how individuals form social structures and social locations within these structures.

On the meso-level, social norms articulate who can perform which kind of behaviour, who has access to which resources, and who has access to which spaces. Such norms can take formal form in laws and regulations, but there are also informal social norms on this level. Social norms can for example be found in the ways in which organizations frame their objectives and in the way they frame problems and solutions. By framing I mean the use of a "schemata of interpretation" that structures the meaning of reality (Verloo & Lombardo 2007: 32, referring to Goffman 1974: 21). Although frames can provide normative directions for behaviour, they are not always intentional. The use of frames originates both in discursive and in practical consciousness. Discursive consciousness means the way people, when asked, can describe how they understand a specific situation. However, frames can also originate in practical consciousness, "in routines and rules that commonly are applied in certain contexts without an awareness that these are indeed rules or routines, and that they could have been different" (Verloo & Lombardo 2007: 32, referring to Giddens 1984). Social norms are thus embedded within the framing of problems and solutions, hierarchically structuring "right" and "wrong", as well as who can decide on whose behalf, and which behaviour is allowed, preferred, or restricted. Furthermore, potentially affecting the other facets discussed above, some people are allowed certain behaviour while others are not, which is also part of the way inequality is produced within this facet.

On a macro-level, social norms are found in dominant discourses. Dominant discourses can be seen as the way of speaking or behaving concerning a given topic that is the most common and/or that is articulated by people who are in more powerful positions. These discourses contain ideological beliefs about what are seen as important topics of knowledge. Dominant discourses exist in the repetition of a repertoire of language and behaviour (Hall 1997/2001: 72; Foucault 1975/1991; 1976/1998). They are also expressions of specific ways in which social problems and directions for change are understood. Looking specifically at social norms in dominant discourses thus makes it possible to see how inequalities are perpetuated. Dominant discourses have a persistent character because of their repetition throughout many domains in society, both through people in power and through compliance by non-dominant people. One can also look at alternative discourses, counter-narratives that exist parallel or in opposition to dominant discourses. These counter-narratives and dominant discourses do not exist in a strict binary, but they do form a useful analytical distinction. As norms and dominant discourses change, counter-narratives present within society can eventually become (more) dominant. It is important to study counter-narratives as well as dominant discourses in order to understand possibilities for change.

Social classes are (partly) reproduced through social norms. Within social classes, specific norms are reproduced and seen as "higher" than others; this famously includes the subtle ways in which norms concerning higher or lower taste are reproduced (Bourdieu 1986/2006; van den Haak 2014). It also includes the norms that are communicated in dominant discourses

concerning the labour market. Work ethics or meritocratic ideals can thus be part of dominant discourses and result in obscuring structural class inequalities.

Social norms are also part of the ways in which members of ethnic groups distinguish themselves or are distinguished by others, as well as of the way inequalities between ethnic groups are formed. Adherence to social norms can be unequally attributed to people from different ethnic backgrounds, which is part of the ways in which ethnic boundaries and inequalities are made. Dominant discourses concerning (national) citizenship can hold certain (minority) ethnicities against different standards than other (majority) ethnic groups, or they can push minority ethnicities to adapt to ethnic majority norms (Brubaker 2001; van Huis & de Regt 2005; Van Houdt *et al.* 2011).

Gender norms are also part of how inequalities are reproduced. Men and women are generally expected to fit within the gender binary. Following that binary, men and women are held to different expectations when it comes to work (including care work), education, politics, and their rights regarding their body and sexuality. These norms are reproduced through dominant discourses about gender. Hegemonic masculinity can be seen as a dominant discourse that pushes men to behave in certain ways: to be brave, dependable, strong, emotionally stable, rational, wealthy, and have power over others (Coston & Kimmel 2012). These norms are not fixed, but depend on the societal and historical situation. Hegemonic masculinity thus "embodies the currently most honoured way of being a man" (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 832). Though the men who really enact this hegemonic masculinity might even be a minority, all other men (in specific historical and societal settings) position themselves in relation to them. Hegemonic masculinity furthermore ideologically legitimizes the subordination of women to men (ibid.), not necessarily violently, although violence can be a part of it, but through "culture, institutions, and persuasion". Compliance by men and women in non-dominant positions is part of why this hegemony is powerful (ibid.).

Furthermore, social norms, whether on the micro- or meso-level or in dominant discourses, can depend on how class, ethnicity, gender, and other dimensions of inequality intersect. It depends on these intersections how one is expected to behave, think, and feel and how one expects others to.

In my study on how social interventions that target disadvantaged men impact on gender+ (in)equality (RQ1), the three facets of inequality highlighted above allow me to study three crucial aspects of gender+ interventions 1) the impact of interventions on social locations, and more specifically on changing constraints and possibilities that are formed by structural inequalities along the lines of class, gender, and ethnicity, 2) impact on identities and emotions, and 3) impact on norms, both in micro- or meso-settings (through framing), and as part of the way dominant macro-discourses or counter-narratives are articulated in interventions.

Furthermore, from a perspective on men and masculinities, the above three facets of inequality lead to a research question that more specifically assesses what kinds of impact social interventions for men can have on gender+ equality:

RQ 1a *How do social interventions that target disadvantaged men impact on men's social locations, identities, and norms?*

1.1.2 METHODOLOGICAL AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL INTERVENTIONS: FRAME ANALYSIS, INFORMED GROUNDED THEORY, AND SUBJECTIFICATION

To study how social interventions that target men impact on multiple facets of gender+ inequality, I have looked for methodological and critical perspectives that help study and interpret these interventions and their impact (the third theoretical challenge in the introduction). I have studied the interventions' articulated aims and their observed impact, as well as they ways participants experienced the interventions by studying the framing, practices, and experiences of interventions in their local and discursive contexts.

Frame analysis: articulated aims

To study social interventions' impact on gender+ equality, I have used insights from Critical Frame Analysis (CFA) (Verloo 2005; 2007; Verloo & Lombardo 2007), a methodology that builds on social-movement theory and was developed for policy analysis in order to assess the explicit and implicit interpretations of problems, solutions, and roles in policy interventions. Analytical questions asked in CFA are: What is seen as a problem? (In CFA this is called the *diagnosis*.) What is seen as a solution? (This is called the *prognosis*.) Who are voicing these problems and solutions? Who are seen as problematic? Who are seen as responsible to act? Moreover, CFA also examines the implicit or explicit assumptions about the coherence of these components, for example whether diagnosis and prognosis are logically connected (Verloo 2005; 2007; Verloo & Lombardo 2007: 31; van der Haar & Verloo 2013).

In my research I have used the above-formulated basic ideas from CFA to study the articulated aims of social interventions and understand them in their context (CFA can also be used in a more extended analysis, see Verloo & Lombardo 2007: 31). I see social interventions as phenomena that aim to change the world in an intended direction and typically incorporate and articulate not only interpretations of specific target groups, problems, and solutions, but also the social context of such articulations and who should have what role in carrying out such changes.

I study the articulated aims of social interventions by asking the following question:

RQ 1b *How does the (contextualized) framing in social interventions impact on social locations, identities, and norms?*

Informed grounded theory: contextualized observed practices and contextualized experiences

Besides their articulated aims and intended impact, social interventions are likely to have unintended consequences, if only because the people who design interventions cannot fully know the world in which they intervene (Giddens 1984/2001: 9-12). It is therefore important to study interventions as contextualized observed practices and as contextualized experiences. By contextualized I mean that practices and framing should be studied in their local contexts and discursive macro-contexts. In order to study such contextualized practices I use an inductive

"grounded theory" approach, more precisely an "informed grounded theory" approach. Grounded theory is a way of doing social-science research in which theory is developed inductively: learning and theorizing based on what happens in the field of study, developing concepts based on observations, and collecting more data based on questions or hypotheses that rise from fieldwork. This makes it an iterative process between the research field and the building of theory, and allows for unanticipated directions of inquiry, making the approach especially suitable for studying unknown and dynamic phenomena (Charmaz 2008: 155).

The initial work by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and the later work of Glaser (1978; 1998; 2001; 2005) argues that literature review should be delayed until the analysis is almost completed in order to keep the researcher open to discoveries based on findings in the research field, and to prevent forcefully fitting findings into preconceived ideas. Others (Bruce 2007; Schreiber 2001: 57), however, have argued that not reviewing literature at the beginning would put scholars in an impossible position: It would prevent them from doing research in fields they are schooled in and in which they have research experience, as it is impossible to "unlearn" theories while starting a new research. As it is impossible to be free from pre-existing ideas about the research field, delaying theoretical framing pushes researchers to hide preconceptions, which do not go away by ignoring them. Furthermore, not reviewing literature would put a researcher at the risk of "reinventing the wheel" and not contributing to existing theory (Thornberg 2011).

Building on that criticism and attempting to involve theory in grounded-theory research earlier on, Thornberg (2011) suggests an *informed* grounded theory. With informed grounded theory, the researcher reviews literature early on, but takes up a critical stance towards the existing theory (Thornberg calls this "theoretical agnosticism"), thus attempting not to force data into pre-existing concepts. This way, the literature can still provide guidance by drawing the researcher to possible important features of the data, while competing theoretical perspectives can be involved to keep an "open mind". By adding existing theory in the iterative process between theory and the research field, Thornberg expands on the concept of "theoretical sampling" that is part of the grounded theory approach. "Theoretical sampling" is usually described as a way of selecting new data in grounded theory research as informed by the emerging theory, and is intended to check the theory and find nuances or improvements. Applied to the selection of literature, "theoretical sampling" additionally means that the researcher does an on-going literature review based on already selected literature, as well as constructed concepts and ideas arising from the data. The literature review, like the data collection, stops when a stage of "theoretical saturation" sets in, a stage in which no further data is needed to complete the theory.

The *informed* grounded theory in this study makes it possible to focus on social locations, identities and norms, helping to look beyond the framing of target groups, problems, and solutions and to study the interventions in terms of their impact on gender+ inequality. At the same time, the *grounded* theory approach allowed me to be open to observe processes (including effects) that were unintended, and to see the practices and observed impact of social interventions within their local and discursive contexts.

By studying social interventions, not only the ways they are intended to unfold, but also the actual practices and the perceptions of men who take part in these interventions in a "grounded" and open way, I aim to understand the social interventions as micro-interactions that take place in meso- and macro-contexts. Such a combined micro-, meso- and macro-

perspective helps to find patterns or mechanisms that take place in similar projects, understanding them in their local context as well as in relation to dominant discourses.

The focus on observed practices and (discursive) context has helped me formulate the following research question:

RQ 1c *How do (contextualized) practices in social interventions that target disadvantaged men impact on social locations, identities, and norms?*

Furthermore, the informed grounded theory approach and my aim of studying the (unintended) impact of social interventions require me to study the experiences of the participants – the men targeted by the social interventions. Through these participants' perspectives I will study the participants' own experiences with inequalities and their perceptions of the interventions' impact. After analysing participants' experiences, I will show how the experienced impact can be understood as impact on social locations, identities, and norms. These considerations have led me to the following research question:

RQ 1d *How do disadvantaged men who participate in social interventions experience the intervention's impact (on their social location, identity, and norms)?*

In conclusion, social interventions' impact on social locations, identities, and norms can now be distinguished as being impact that follows the intervention's articulated aims, impact that can be observed externally (by a researcher or participants), and impact that is experienced by the participants. Articulated aims can be found in the way the interventions frame target groups, problems, and solutions. Under observed impact I understand the ways in which the interventions transform or reproduce dimensions and facets of inequality in the project's practices. As for experienced impact, these are effects (disadvantaged) men perceive on their everyday lives, which I will analyse as impact on social locations, identities, and norms. Because social interventions do not take place in isolation, I will contextualize the articulated aims, and observed and experienced impact in their local and political discursive context by relating them to dominant discourses.

A critically informed perspective on social interventions

Adding to the multi-facetted theoretical framework to gender+ equality explained above, and as part of the *informed* grounded theory, I draw on Foucault's theoretical perspective on normalizing "technologies" in order to critically assess social interventions and value their impact. In Foucault's work on "subjectification" ("assujetissement"), he unmasks activities of power within institutions as "technologies of domination" through which people are subjected. At the same time these same technologies can be "technologies of the self", ways in which subjects with

agency are created (and/or by which they create themselves) (Foucault 1975/1991; Rabinow 1997; Kelly 2013; Butler 1997: 16-18)[3].

Using historical analysis, Foucault shows how social control is enforced through hierarchal cognitive processes – through the production of knowledge, and through surveillance. He specifically demonstrated this in his historical research on institutions: prisons, armies, schools, and hospitals. His analysis critically shows that domination is not just enacted by an elite or state that can make the ultimate threat of violence, but also through more subtle processes in society. He thereby shows how people are dominated in ways that are not always perceived as such by those who are dominated (Foucault 1975/1991; 1976/1998; Fraser 1981; Hall 1997/2001).

The concept of normalization is central in the understanding of these cognitive disciplining processes. Normalization in the Foucauldian sense refers to the way persons, or "bodies" are, through representations of ideals and through a threat of (subtle or less subtle) punishment pushed towards behaviour that is dominantly seen as "normal". Moreover, because a set rule becomes normal, oftentimes merely the gaze of others is sufficient to ensure people discipline themselves towards a norm, which makes disciplinary power possible with the use of little force (Foucault 1975/1991).

Foucault's theory leads to the idea that social interventions can be seen as ways in which people are normalized (which theoretically aligns with the third facet of inequality, social norms): men who have to conform to hegemonic masculinity, workers who do not argue their class positions, "ethnic others" who need to become assimilated citizens, or specific intersections of these. However, while I am critical of only assessing the intended positive outcomes, I am also critical of only seeing social interventions as normalizing "technologies" and therefore wish to consider how (some) social interventions might exceed processes of normalization and domination.

Although the agency angle of his theory is underexposed in his own work (Crossley 1996; Fraser 1981: 272, 279; Kelly 2013: 89: McNay 1992: 38), Foucault's work also allows one to see social interventions as phenomena through which subjects are enabled to transform inequalities. Conscious and acting subjects can potentially transform their ways of perceiving themselves within power relations, and thus transform whether and how they comply with, or resist, these power relationships. This second angle of Foucault's work can be found in his understanding of "subjectification". Differently from subjugation and normalization, subjectification also entails the way subjects are formed as active agents within relationships of power (Foucault 1975/1991). Foucault shows that power exists within relationships between people, and these relationships are a site where subjects also struggle against power and where shifts can take place because of these struggles (1982). These shifts can be individual transformations of the way the subject understands oneself within these power relationships (similarly to what I noted about the second facet of inequality, identities and emotions) (Foucault 1991: 32, 1976/1998), as well as shifts in the structural power relationships between individuals and groups (see the first facet of inequality, social location). As Foucault's theory helps one to understand that power is a complex notion that is found in webs of power relations, this means that resistance to power also takes

[3] Where Foucault uses the term "assujetissement" or subjectivication to mean subjugation and where he uses the constitution of thinking and acting subjects can be debated. According to Kelly, "assujetissement" in *Discipline and Punish* only means subjugation, while he later, in *The Will to Knowledge,* "assujetissement" explicitly has two meanings (2013: 88).

place within these webs using a plurality of strategies. It is therefore important to also study resistance to inequality within subtle power relationships, not just in its more visible incarnations.

Looking at social interventions as articulated aims, as practices, and as experiences that take place in a context of dominant discourses allows me to study subtle forms of resistance or compliance to power/inequality structures. This critical perspective thus enables me to study the ways in which social interventions can be seen as normalizing and/or resisting/enabling. It therefore offers a critical perspective for the study of social interventions that takes possible enabling impact into account. The informed grounded theory approach moreover allows one to be attentive to other ways of valuing impact. These considerations lead me to the second main research question:

RQ 2 *In which ways can (impact of) social interventions targeting disadvantaged men be valued as normalizing, enabling, or otherwise?*

1.2 Research methods: How to study gender+ (in)equality in social interventions?

1.2.1 Studying gender+ (in)equality in interventions for disadvantaged men

Studying "male emancipation" projects in the Netherlands

To study the ways social interventions that target disadvantaged men impact on gender+ equality, I have selected a set of social interventions in the Netherlands that in the field have been called "male emancipation" projects. I have studied these projects between 2011 and 2013.

The "male emancipation" projects in the Netherlands offered a unique possibility to study social interventions that aim to involve men in gender+ equality. The Netherlands has an active field of state-supported social work dedicated to integration and gender equality policies that for years has had a strong focus on migrant women (Roggeband & Verloo 2007). The recent attention for men is new and unusual, making for an exceptional case of gender equality interventions. There have been initiatives for gender equality that focus on men in other countries as well, and this attention seems to be growing. The attention for the topic in the UN HeforShe campaign and the growing MenEngage Alliance also highlight this.[4] Research on these interventions is highly valuable for understanding the impact of social interventions targeting (disadvantaged) men and boys, but research so far has often not extended beyond an evaluation of the interventions' stated goals (exceptions are: Flood 2015; Verma *et al.* 2006; Esplen 2006; Flood & Howson eds. 2015; Edström *et al.* 2015; Robb *et al.* 2015).

A more pragmatic reason to study these projects is that I had access to the projects because I participated in an evaluative study for the funding organization that financed 23 of such "male emancipation" projects. The 23 organizations had all agreed to participate in an evaluative study that was focussed on the ways the projects invited men to participate and made

[4] http://www.heforshe.org/en ; http://menengage.org/ (both consulted 27-12-2016).

sure the men kept attending (van der Haar, van Huis & Verloo 2014). More importantly, it turned out that the organizations did participate in the research, providing access to documents and allowing a research team to carry out observations and hold interviews.

In order to answer my two main research questions (RQ1: How do social interventions that target disadvantaged men impact on gender+ equality? RQ2: In which ways can (impact of) social interventions targeting disadvantaged men be valued as normalizing, enabling, or otherwise?), I have studied project documents, interviewed professionals, performed participant observations, and interviewed participants. By using these research methods I have studied these interventions' articulated aims (as articulated by professionals), their observed impact (as observed by the researcher) and experienced impact (as perceived by participants) in their local and political-discursive context.

Frame analysis of project documents and interviews

To answer my question of how (contextualized) framing impact on social locations, identities, and norms (RQ1b), I have studied project plans and conducted interviews with the professionals[5] who organized the projects. I first studied how these professionals framed their target groups, problems, and solutions, and how these frames are (dis)connected. I then studied which (dominant) discourses were reflected within the framing.

To study the professionals' framing, I analysed 23 project plans and conducted 23 interviews with 41 professionals (some interviews took place with 2 or 3 professionals at the same time). The 23 project plans were obtained with permission of the participating organizations through the organization that funded all projects. The project plans are documents written by the professionals that state their objectives for the project, including which men they aimed to involve in the projects, what they saw as the problems that required an intervention, and what were the solutions to these problems. The project plans were written in order to plan the projects, but also as a way to obtain funding and therefore adapted to what the funding organization saw as key problems and goals. Therefore, the funding organization's documentation was also included in this study, as these documents helped understand how the funding organization influenced the framing used in the project plans.

The 23 interviews with 41 professionals were conducted during the projects' first year (February–April 2011).[6] In these semi-structured interviews, that ranged between 1.5 and 2 hours, the professionals were asked to elaborate on the project plans and further explain what they intended to do in their project, why, and to what ends. They were asked to elaborate on concepts they used in the project plans and on how they saw the problems of the target groups in their local contexts (a translated topic list is included in the appendix). All 23 interviews with professionals were recorded and transcribed. During most interviews two to three professionals who were involved in the projects were present.

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[5] I call the people who organize and carry out projects professionals because they in most cases were trained to do their work (mostly in social work) and are often referred to in this way in the research field. In my empirical chapters I call them "trainers" if they are in the role of training a group of participants, either by educating the group or leading a discussion.

[6] Most interviews with professionals were conducted with Marleen van der Haar as a co-interviewer, both in order to involve the research team within the field and to balance the number of interviewers and respondents.

My frame analysis assessed how the professionals framed their target groups, problems, and solutions (this includes directions for change and methods/strategies to get there), and how they connect these aspects of their framing to each other.[7] Internal inconsistencies in the ways problems and solutions are formulated can be seen as particularly telling in such a frame analysis (Verloo & Lombardo 2007: 35), as they offer insights in how the framing of social interventions can have unintended impact, insights that lead to new questions on why such inconsistencies occur.

To study the impact on social locations I analysed the projects' articulated aims in terms of their gendered or ethnicized or classed practices and in terms of the possibilities and constraints related to these practices. To study the projects' impact on identities and emotions, I analysed how professionals aimed to make target groups feel more included within collectivities, for example within a local community or within "Dutch society", and how they would encourage target groups to rally behind certain (collective) goals. I also assessed whether certain particular framings could lead to (feelings of) exclusion, and asked how they aimed to get target groups to identify with gender+ equality goals. Lastly, I analysed the way the professionals' framing aimed to change social norms.

To study which (dominant) discourses were reflected in these social interventions, I conducted a secondary analysis of studies on dominant discourses in Dutch society and compared these with the professionals' framings. The secondary analysis concerned discourses on gender equality, migration, integration, and citizenship. Placing the interventions in their discursive political context helped to understand both why professionals framed the projects in certain ways and how these discourses impacted on gender+ equality. I also indicated where professionals articulated counter-narratives to dominant discourses. I moreover analysed whether the articulated aims of the social interventions were normalizing, enabling, or could be valued otherwise (RQ2).

Participant observations in three case studies

In order to understand how social interventions that target disadvantaged men impact on gender+ equality (RQ1), I have studied how contextual practices impacted on social locations, identities, and norms in three specific interventions (RQ1c). Comparing these three case studies helped me find similarities and differences in contexts and practices. These similarities and differences could then be analysed in their local contexts as well as related to dominant discourses in order to better understand the interventions in their (Dutch) context and how they impacted on social locations, identities, and norms.

I selected the three case studies based on their similarities, their differences, and their accessibility. They were all social interventions aimed at disadvantaged men, but focussed on three different age groups and on men with different ethnic backgrounds. There was a different mix of ethnic backgrounds (homogenic versus heterogenic) within each case study: the first case study's participants were senior men with heterogeneous ethnic (all migrant) backgrounds; the second case study concerned a homogeneous group of fathers with similar migration backgrounds from Morocco and who had children living at home; the third case study was a

[7] For clarity, I will mostly stick to the more common concepts of "problems" and "solutions", where in Critical Frame Analysis the terms *diagnosis* and *prognosis* would be used.

project with white working-class men, of whom around half had white traveller backgrounds. These differences allowed for a better understanding of how these local contexts influenced practices and impacted on gender+ equality.

For the first case study I did 24 participant observations between 2011 and 2013. Most of these observations were performed between December 2011 and May 2012 during weekly meetings of around two hours. Extended access (additional to the evaluative research mentioned earlier) was assured through the fact that the professionals conducting the project were looking for someone who would make a film about the project. I offered to do this for them, both because I had experience in filming and editing short films and because it offered me the opportunity to study one of the projects more closely. I asked for consent from the participants and professionals to use the film material for my research and started to film with a small hand-held camera while sitting among the group of men or while joining them on excursions. When I thought I had enough film material about a specific meeting or when someone was present who did not want to be filmed (for example, a new participant in the group) I stopped filming and would take notes instead.

For the second case study I did 8 participant observations (without filming) between 2011 and 2013. In 2011 and 2012 I visited the project two times, but most observations for this case study were done between May and July 2013 in weekly gatherings of around two hours. Access was gained through the professionals who asked the group's consent for my visits after the group had come together three times. Because the group had a limited number of sessions when I started participating in the 2013 group, this case study has a lower number of observations compared to the other two. The second case study therefore relies more heavily on the perspective of one of the professionals, who elaborated on his experiences in informal conversations before and after the observations and in an interview conducted by Marleen van der Haar, to which she has granted me access.

For the third case study I did 21 participant observations between April and July 2013. This group of young men (and one young woman) came together twice a week, around four hours per week. I participated intensively in this group, including in activities that were aimed at training participants to be community activity leaders. It included many sports and play activities through which I also physically experienced the activities.

In all the case studies the participant observations consisted of attending educational meetings, group discussions, activities, and excursions. During group discussions I would watch, listen, take notes, or film (only in the first case study). I minimized my participation in discussions to limit the intrusion in the group interaction (in subsection 1.2.2 I will reflect on intrusiveness). Before and after meetings, during breaks and during excursions and activities, I regularly spoke with participants and professionals informally, which offered more data on the projects and provided the opportunity to invite participants for face-to-face interviews.

For my analysis of the three case studies I studied the interactions between participants and professionals by coding my research notes and transcriptions/descriptions of film images. Inductive analysis was developed into more deductive coding with, informed by Yuval-Davis' theory (2011), in the end, a special focus on social locations, identities, and social norms. In the analysis process certain topics emerged as specifically important for each project and relevant for answering my research questions. These topics are highlighted in the case studies' analysis.

Furthermore, I analysed in which ways the (contextualized) project practices impacted on social locations, identities, and norms (RQ1c), and to what extent this impact could be interpreted as normalizing, enabling or otherwise (RQ2). Based on the analysis of my observations I added new concepts to these understandings of interventions, which allowed a better understanding of the impact of the interventions.

Participant observations in 19 more projects

Observations from 19 more projects were analysed to assess whether the findings from the three case studies were also found in the other cases. These findings specifically concerned the ways in which men were involved in gender equality issues and the way gender equality was discussed. For these 19 projects, I analysed how these gender equality practices impacted on gender+ equality (RQ1) with regards to the facets of social location, identity, and norms (RQ1a). Compared to the three case studies, contextualization was more limited here because of the larger number of cases in the analysis and the fewer observations per project.

To analyse the way interventions tried to involve men in gender equality issues, I studied 49 observations in 19 projects. I visited these 19 projects 1 to 4 times over the course of 1 to 3 project years (2011-2013). Most projects (9) were visited 3 times, some were observed twice (5 projects), 3 projects only once, and 2 projects 4 times. Projects that lasted the longest were visited the most (all 23 projects received funding for 2 years, while 16 projects received funding for an additional year).

Just as in the three case studies, I attended group discussions, educational meetings, excursions, and activities in these 19 projects. I listened, observed, and took notes in group discussions and educational meetings, participating in activities when possible. In 2012, I purposively sought out participation in some more physical activities, as these turned out to be found important by professionals as well as participants. In 2013, I aimed to, when possible, participate in meetings that were more explicitly about gender equality, about masculinities, or about intimate relationships, because previous data had triggered questions about these topics. In other words, I was carrying out a form of theoretical sampling. In order to build on developing insights born from the analysis of the three case studies, I looked for ways in which gender equality was addressed and created a typology of strategies based on these observations in 19 more projects.

Furthermore, I also assessed how the practices that were specifically aimed at involving men in gender equality issues in the 19 projects could be seen as normalizing, enabling, or otherwise (RQ2).

Semi-structured interviews with participants

In order to study the experienced impact of social interventions on gender+ equality, and on social locations, identities, and norms (RQ1 & RQ1a), I studied the experiences of participants. To determine the ways these men had perceived the interventions had impacted on their lives, it was first necessary to understand how participants saw and experienced inequalities in their lives. I therefore analysed their narratives on inequalities before analysing how the participants experienced the projects and their impact (on social locations, identities, and norms) (RQ1d).

I interviewed 35 participants. Sixteen of these participated in the three case studies indicated above (Case study 1: 6 respondents; Case study 2: 5 respondents; Case study 3: 5 respondents). The other 19 respondents were participants in 11 other male-emancipation projects part of the same funding program. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, with the exception of two, whose respondents did not want the interview to be recorded. Of these interviews I took notes during the interview. Furthermore, the six interviews of the first case study were recorded on a small video camera placed on a tripod (I will reflect on the intrusiveness of this way of interviewing in subsection 1.2.2). All interviews were conducted in Dutch.

In the selection of respondents I aimed for variety in the men's backgrounds – this means ethnic background, age, and family composition – which I tried to obtain by purposive sampling. However, there were also more practical reasons to select respondents. 18 of the 35 respondents were invited for an interview during my observation visits. Often an informal conversation before or after such a visit was seized as a chance to ask someone for an interview. 17 respondents were participants who were suggested for an interview by professionals, who also arranged an appointment. These might have been men whom the professionals thought would offer an interesting story, or even a positive story about their project. However, I did not see any great difference between the respondents I selected myself and the respondents that were selected by the professionals.

Most interviews were conducted in a private office at a community building. On two occasions I visited the men at home for the interview. Sometimes I interviewed the men directly after the observation visit, but more often I made an appointment for another day.

To structure the interview I made a topic list (see appendix) that I used in a flexible manner in order to make the interviews resemble "normal" conversations so the men would feel at ease and speak openly. After briefly introducing myself and my study, I typically started the interview by asking how the men came to join the project, which often resulted in narratives about problems in their lives which they wanted to solve by participating in the project. Prompting and probing from my side resulted in the men talking about the context of these problems, about work they used to do, about unemployment, about their migration histories and their families. This resulted in short life histories that provided a background for their participation in these projects and offered an important perspective for understanding how the men saw their social locations, their identities, which social norms they found important, and what effects the interventions had.

To learn more about the projects and to understand how the participants interpreted the activities and how they affected them, I asked them about their activities in the project. After asking about the activities in a general fashion, I prompted them about activities or meetings that referred to specific topics: if and how they had talked about their family or upbringing, about men and women, about work and more. I also asked whether they thought the project changed something in their lives. The interviews lasted between thirty minutes and two hours, with most interviews lasting around one hour (a translated topic list is included in the appendix).

Besides these 35 face-to-face interviews, I also talked to many participants in informal conversations before and after meetings and during activities. I took notes on these conversations and used them in the analysis.

The face-to-face interviews, with additional informal conversations during participant observations, provided rich material to reveal the way participants understood their situation and the way the interventions impacted on their lives. The interviews moreover offered another perspective on how the interventions can be seen as normalizing, enabling, or otherwise (RQ2).

1.2.2 Issues of trustworthiness, validity and ethical considerations

The informed grounded theory approach I introduced in the theoretical section has had consequences for the way my research was carried out, affecting both its strengths and its weaknesses. In my study, building theory and formulating and answering research questions has been an iterative process of collecting and comparing research data, reading literature, developing research questions, theory emerging from notes, collecting and analysing new data, conversations with colleagues, writing papers, and eventually writing up the dissertation. In the final stage, the existing literature formed an important frame to shape my research questions and to analyse the empirical data, whereas the research questions were broader at the start of the research process. Gradually, the literature helped me to focus on specific aspects in the field, while the analysed data specified which theories shed the best light to critically understand specific aspects of the field. In writing this dissertation, the findings were linked to the theoretical framework. The writing process can therefore be seen as the last step in an iterative process of informed grounded theory which has a longer history of comparing findings to existing theory and emerging (or constructing) theory.

As described earlier, the advantage of this way of collecting, analysing, reviewing, and presenting data and literature is that it leaves room for unexpected outcomes and angles, while also being able to build on existing theoretical insights. The strengths and limitations of the study, however, also depend on other research practices. I will here discuss the ways in which I have tried to ensure the validity or trustworthiness of my research, including the way in which internal and external validity or transferability are possible, followed by a discussion of the ethical considerations which have affected the research.

Internal validity and credibility

The iterative research process described above, which comes with an informed grounded theory approach, has been part of a verification process that is meant to increase the research's internal validity or credibility, and make sure the findings are congruent with the reality of the research field (Shenton 2004: 64; Merriam 1998). My aim has been to ensure coherence between research questions, research methods, sampling methods, and the emerging theory.

Triangulation and purposive sampling are also a part of the iterative way of reaching (more) credibility (Lincoln & Guba 1985). In my study, triangulation meant collecting and comparing different kinds of data (documents, interviews, and observations), as well as comparing the perspectives of respondents. This triangulation has ensured that findings could be checked (which I call verification triangulation) and that one type of data could fill voids that were left by other types of data (which I call complementary triangulation). Purposive sampling meant not only looking for cases that could answer new questions, but also looking for negative

cases in order to check new data against the developing theory. These negative cases, projects or respondents that contradicted the developing theory, sometimes changed the emerging theory and/or helped add nuances to that theory.

The tactics I applied to help ensure the honesty of respondents, and therefore this study's credibility and ("measurement") validity included interviewing them in environments that felt safe and private, promising and safeguarding their anonymity, establishing a rapport by communicating there were no wrong answers or that the research was not meant to scrutinize them specifically. This last assurance felt especially important in my contact with the professionals, who might have otherwise seen the visits of researchers as a way for the funding organization to make sure they were spending the funding correctly.

Building on rapport as a white female researcher with (non-white) male respondents can be seen as problematic, while it also has advantages. Hearn (2013: 27) states that interviewing men entails considerations of being critical about the respondents' position of power as men and at the same time (as in all interview situations) necessitating politeness and respect. It is necessary to take intersectional positioning into consideration. In my study, the men were not necessarily more privileged than me, as my privilege as a white and educated person compensated for some of their male privilege. Moreover, besides considerations about intersectional positioning, there are other situational dynamics that affect the course of an interview: individual personalities (people who talk a lot versus those who need more probing), the respondent's mood, and the course of the conversation itself, which depended on whether topics triggered stories. Other scholars have described fieldwork as "serial experiences in working to establish and continually maintain an insider status throughout conversations" (De Andrade 2000; see also Young 2004: 191). Moreover, Young indicates that an outsider position can stimulate important and revealing conversations in the field (2004: 192).

The person whom the professionals and participants encountered during interviews and participant observations was a tall, white, black/brown-haired woman in her thirties, who during research visits was usually modestly dressed in casual clothing. Participants of the projects often asked me where I was from, and whether I had a mixed background, for example a mix of Dutch with Indonesian, Turkish, or Eastern European, which is not the case. These remarks, which were made by men with migrant backgrounds, gave me a subtle experience of closeness, or of "passing" (as a migrant) in Yanow's terms (2015: 102; also see Goffman 1963/2009). However, generally I was an outsider and probably experienced as quite different: as a woman, as white, as someone with a high education and as someone who was younger (in most cases). Because of my research activities, I was regularly perceived as a university student and therefore probably as younger than I actually was. This perceived student position offered respondents the "chance" to teach me about how they saw the world and how they saw the situation they were in, which functioned as a good way to let them talk. As I interviewed participants, my main intention was to try to let the men speak as openly and comfortably about their own experiences as possible. Only sometimes did I shift to a less open way of asking questions when I thought an answer seemed less honest and geared towards social desirability, or when I asked about a topic that might be more sensitive: sometimes this occurred when asking about their relationship with their partner, as some men showed hesitation in talking about this topic. I reflect on this issue in Chapter 5 (Section 5.3.4).

In general, I experienced that a rapport developed and that sometimes participants would even tell me things that they would not talk about in the project group (divorce, homosexuality), for fear of gossip within the local community.

Social desirability, despite these efforts and despite positive experiences, is always an uncertainty in interviewing. In my research I have therefore taken into account that certain narratives on specific topics could have been influenced by social desirability, or could be dependent on the interview situation, while at other moments I have assumed accounts were truthful. I have done so by reflecting on why a respondent would say something in a specific context. Triangulation with observations and interviews with professionals also helped check for social desirability.

As said above in 1.2.1, I interviewed six men on camera, which arguably counteracts creating safety and anonymity in an interview situation that is intended for the respondents to tell the "truth". The reason for interviewing the men from the first case study on film was that the professionals gave me greater access (beyond what was agreed for the evaluative research) in exchange for making a short film for them. Despite the camera, the interviews with the men were open, in the sense that they revealed in elaborate ways personal issues in men's lives. The aspects that helped to establish this openness (in my perception) were that the camera was quite small and most interviews were considerably long, one to two hours. I also promised the men that I would edit the film in a way that it would only show fragments of their interviews that were important to provide a good understanding of the project. Therefore, parts of the conversations were experienced by the respondents as not meant for the eventual film, but as explaining their situation to me, a (student) researcher or as a person who was interested.

As the fieldwork lasted three years, there was a "prolonged engagement" with the research field (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Shenton 2004: 65), especially concerning my contact with the professionals (in most cases the participants changed over the three years), in which rapport was created and emerging theory could be checked against new data. In the case studies this concerned the professionals as well as the participants, as I had contact with the participants over 8 to 23 observational visits and interviewed them either during these visits or on additional visits. In the first and the third case study, however, the engagement has been longer than in the second. Despite this shorter engagement I found that the second case study added to the understanding of the research field and helped answer my research questions. My experiences of rapport in the face-to-face interviews and prolonged engagement with one of the professionals contributed to this experience.

The prolonged engagement in the case studies made it possible to witness certain participants make changes in their lives. These observations contributed to understanding the impact of the interventions in addition to the participants' own narratives in the interviews. The interviews, of course, reflected the men's perceptions during that one interview moment, and interviewing the men before and after the project would have been a better way to grasp the impact of interventions than relying on their accounts from one point in time. Within this study, however, it was difficult to achieve such a setup because the professionals felt that at the start of the project they had to try their best to keep the men participating in the project. Many professionals therefore did not want to discuss "sensitive" topics like gender equality at the beginning of the projects, and it was decided to let participants get used to the group dynamics first before inviting them for an interview. Moreover, to bring up such topics at the beginning of

the study would have made the process more intrusive, so interviews were conducted when projects were running, mostly towards the end of the projects.

Prolonged engagement also helped the study to reach "theoretical saturation" at certain moments when new data did not add to the developing theory. However, the final theory should still be judged as theory that is always subject to possible improvement.

Despite my efforts to limit intrusiveness – and therefore to increase internal validity – I influenced the research field merely by being present for observations and interviews, and by introducing myself and asking questions in certain ways. Adding to my accounts about my presence, I will here add that filming during observations, which I did in the first case study, can be seen as an intrusive practice which influences the participants' behaviour. Participants might have felt less at ease and could have behaved more according to social conventions than without the camera. On the other hand, as there had already been a plan to film the project, the men might not have behaved differently when another person had been filming. Moreover, my filming provided a clear reason for my presence, which granted me access to a project that might otherwise not have been studied to the same extent. I also limited intrusiveness by using a small handheld camera and sitting among the group of men instead of walking around with the camera.

Other points at which the data collection could be called intrusive were the times during the research process in which findings from the evaluative research were reported back to the professionals. My intrusion took the form of advice given to the funding organization, towards the end of the second year, to finance a third year and to try to help the professionals focus more strongly on the gender equality goals of the program. Professionals after these reports continued with their projects (16 of 23 projects), and the research continued as well. These reports may have therefore influenced the research field.

External validity and transferability

I have aimed to provide detailed contextual information (of course with limitations) so that the reader may be able to assess whether my findings are transferable to other situations. The provided context includes the political discursive context of the Netherlands, which I will discuss in Chapter 2. The contextual local embeddedness of the three case studies in Chapter 3, as well as the participants' backgrounds in Chapter 5 moreover aim to enable the reader to assess transferability and therefore better understand whether other social interventions that aim to involve men in gender+ equality will have similar impact. When contexts are similar, theoretical transferability should be possible, but it remains crucial to assess situations in their own contexts. External validity in the strictest sense is limited, even though the theory is supported (grounded) in research.

The limited external validity but possible theoretical transferability holds for my findings on the interventions, as well as on the projects' participants. The number of cases (interventions) studied is 23, 3 of which are studied in more detail. I have moreover assessed whether findings in those three case studies also apply to 19 other "male emancipation" projects (in Chapter 4). The number of interviewed participants is limited to 35. As it concerns very specific as well as diverse men, the impact of the projects on gender+ equality should be understood within the contexts

of their specific backgrounds before generalizing findings concerning the impact of interventions to other potential participants of such projects.

Despite these limitations in external validity, the contextualized findings are valuable to understand possible outcomes of other social interventions that aim to involve men in gender+ equality. In the concluding chapter of this book I will reflect more on the transferability of the research.

Ethical considerations: anonymity, voices, values, and funding

There were a number of relevant ethical considerations to this study, some of which were aimed at protecting the research subjects, some at giving participants a "voice", and others concerned with the use of (normative) language and categorizations. Lastly, the funding of the study needs to be discussed in order to understand how the funding did and did not influence the research.

Firstly, to protect the research subjects I have given participants and professionals aliases, and avoided mentioning the names of the small municipalities where projects took place, since these projects and therefore also their participants and professionals could otherwise be easily identifiable. Furthermore, participants would be informed in advance about the researcher's visits in order to ensure their consent. In some cases it was not possible to inform everyone because some participants had not been present at the previous meeting, in those cases (but also in other cases) I would introduce and explain myself at the start of the meeting. Concerning my use of film (in the first case study), I made the participants aware of the purpose of the collected film material, including their use for research, before filming. The film itself was shown at a festive neighbourhood gathering organized by the professionals of the project. Before showing it to this larger audience, I showed the film to the men who were most prominently portrayed in order to ask their consent for the viewing and to see their reactions. The preview led to mixed reactions: some were concerned about their looks ("I have become older"), others felt like movie stars or were proud about the clear way they expressed themselves.[8]

The second ethical consideration concerned the aim of giving participants a "voice" in the research. "Voicing" is a way to emphasize the agency of the researched, and a way of letting the researched "speak back" to larger structures of power (Weidman 2014: 43). In feminist research, women are given voices by female researchers, because these voices had previously been lacking in mainstream social research and needed to be heard in order to learn about directions for change. In my research, as it concerns men in disadvantaged positions, the same considerations were taken into account. I provide fragments of transcriptions and detailed accounts of interactions in order to give the researched a voice. Where possible, I provided context for the narratives and interactions. However, sometimes a higher level of abstraction was necessary, and to go beyond individual or everyday life experiences I also use concepts in my writing which most of the participants would not use themselves. Moreover, to write up my arguments comprehensibly this space is sometimes too limited to elaborate on contexts. I have tried to find a balance between these considerations.

The third ethical consideration in this research concerned the use of concepts that cannot be considered value-free, such as equality and gender+ equality. Simply by using the concepts it

[8] In an article with Marleen van der Haar, we reflected on the content of the film, the role of film in the project, and the way masculinity was reproduced in the film (van Huis & van der Haar 2015).

can be understood that I value gender+ equality as a goal that is to be pursued. Although I do see equality as an important value, I also see gender+ equality as an important analytical concept that shows (in)equality to be complex and that fixation on one kind of equality neither does justice to the social reality under study, nor to the possible achievement of equality goals. I also use the multi-facetted perspective on social locations, identities/emotions, and norms, including the attention for dominant macro-discourses, to understand the full complexity of (in)equalities as well as the social interventions that aim to improve gender+ equality.

A fourth ethical consideration, also concerning writing, has been how to represent the ethnic, class, and gender backgrounds of participants and professionals. In my writing I attributed ethnic classifications when I refer to participants and professionals to represent the ethnic diversity of the project. Although not always relevant, I have chosen to consistently indicate the participants' ethnic backgrounds based on self-identification and identification by professionals. Although admittedly problematic, the reason for this is because I expect that readers would otherwise fill in ethnic backgrounds based on presumptions, whether this would mean seeing participants as white or as non-white, or as having specific ethnic backgrounds. Ethnic backgrounds can be expected to in reality be more complex than I have represented. The ethnic categories I use are a mix of ethnic, racial, and geographical classifications, depending on what I know. When representing "white Dutch people," I add the racial classification "white" because many of the migrants also have Dutch citizenship. I usually will write that someone, for example, has a "Turkish ethnic background", instead of saying the person is Turkish, not knowing to what extent being Turkish is relevant to the person's self-identification. I argue that this way of classifying does more justice to the diversity of the people in this study than using dichotomies such as black and white or "autochtoon" and "allochtoon," which is currently very common in the Netherlands (Yanow & Van der Haar 2013; van Huis 2014: 140), but has recently been abandoned by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and the Council for Government Policy (WRR). I sometimes do use the dichotomy migrant/non-migrant, which admittedly is an oversimplification as well. (I will further discuss the use of ethnic dichotomies in the Netherlands in 2.3.1).

Naturally, these men and women are diverse in more ways: they have certain ages and socio-economic backgrounds; some have families; etc. For legibility I have often limited the descriptions to ethnicity. Class backgrounds would have been more complicated to represent, and as most participants have a working-class background, I only point out class positionings when participants were not from working-class backgrounds. Admittedly, one limitation of my research is that I have assumed gender in a binary way without asking the men how they identified.

Finally, the evaluative research through which I obtained my data was funded by the organization that also financed the projects under study. This construction might lead to questions about compromising integrity or bias. In my case, the funding lasted from January 2011 until March 2013, when the evaluative research phase was finished. Afterwards, Radboud University continued the funding, and my research findings were no longer required to be reported back to the original funding organization. The funding organization, moreover, assured me before the start of the study that the researchers could work independently, and that the obtained data could be used freely for publications, if involved organizations are anonymized.

For what it is worth, I myself never felt obstructed where it concerned criticism towards either the funding organization or the projects.

1.2.3 Outline of the empirical chapters

The empirical part of this study will be presented in the next four chapters. In Chapter 2, I will offer a brief history of the studied projects and present my analysis of the ways in which the professionals who organize the "male emancipation" projects framed their target groups, problems, and solutions. Based on secondary analysis I will then formulate the dominant discourses that can be found in the (recent) political discursive context in the Netherlands. I will relate the professionals' framing to these discourses and in the concluding part of Chapter 2 answer my research question: how does (contextualized) framing in social interventions impact on social locations, identities, and norms (RQ1b)? I will also reflect on how the projects' articulated aims can be seen as normalizing, enabling, or otherwise (RQ2).

Chapter 3 consists of the three case studies. For each, I present the interventions' (contextualized) practices and how they impact on social locations, identities/emotions, and norms (RQ1c). After separately presenting the three case studies, a comparative section assesses the differences and similarities between the interventions, and the ways in which they impacted on gender+ equality. Local contexts and dominant discourses, when they are recognized in project practices, are also highlighted in order to further assess how they impacted on gender+ equality.

In Chapter 4, I present an analysis of observations in 19 more projects, more specifically how these interventions tried to involve men in gender equality issues, and in which ways these practices impacted on social locations, identities, and norms (RQ1c). In both Chapter 3 and 4 I reflect on ways in which the projects' practices can be seen as normalizing, enabling, or otherwise (RQ2).

Chapter 5 presents the perspectives of the men who participated in the projects as well as an analysis of their perspectives on, and experiences with, different dimensions of inequality. The chapter also shows how participants perceived the projects and how they experienced their impact on their lives. I then studied what this meant for the impact on their social locations, identities/emotions, and norms (RQ1d), and whether the projects' practices can be seen as normalizing, enabling, or otherwise (RQ2).

In the concluding chapter, I summarize my findings and answer my research questions, including the main questions: How do social interventions that target disadvantaged men impact on gender+ (in)equality? (RQ1) And in which ways can (impact of) social interventions targeting disadvantaged men be valued as normalizing, enabling, or otherwise? (RQ2). I will also reflect on the theoretical challenges raised in the introduction by reassessing the intersectional and multi-facetted model of gender+ equality, the masculinities-studies perspective, as well as the different ways in which the social interventions can be valued and how this relates to Foucault's theory on subjectification.

CHAPTER 2

MALE-EMANCIPATION PROJECTS IN THE DUTCH POLITICAL DISCURSIVE CONTEXT

In 2011, 23 organizations in 16 Dutch municipalities started projects for men that were funded by a program that aimed to increase the "emancipation" and "participation" of both migrant and non-migrant men who were "socially isolated" and had "low education" levels. The projects took place within the field of social work and civil society – in welfare, migrant, and gender equality organizations.[9] All projects were organized by and involved professionals with social-work backgrounds. About half of the professionals involved were men and half were women, and about half of them had a white Dutch background and half had diverse migrant backgrounds.

To understand what were the aims articulated by the professionals organizing these projects for men, I have analyzed in which ways they framed their project's target groups, problems, and solutions (in the sense of both their goals and intended interventions) both in their project plans (2010) and in interviews at the beginning of the projects (2011). Subsequently, I contextualized these ways of framing amidst recent Dutch political discourses and the way they framed target groups, problems, and solutions. At the end of this chapter I will reflect on how the professionals' contextualized framing of target groups, problems, and solutions can be expected to impact on social locations, identities, and norms (RQ1b), and whether the contextualized articulated aims can be characterized as enabling, normalizing, or otherwise (RQ2).

First, however, I will show how the funding program initiated the projects[10] and how it formulated the criteria for awarding funds, which set conditions for professionals' framing.

2.1: A FUNDING PROGRAM AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR INTERVENTIONS FOR MEN

The projects studied here were all funded by a large Dutch NGO, which has as its main goal to "bring people together and to increase social cohesion and participation".[11] After the projects were already running, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science – which in the

[9] Additionally, there is one mental-health organization. Three of the organizations also present themselves as knowledge institutions, one of which focuses on child-rearing, another on gender equality, and a third on "socio-economic issues" (van der Haar, van Huis & Verloo 2014: 29). The male-emancipation projects in question take place in a semi-public field (in social work and civil society), meaning that the organizations which set up the projects work independently as non-profit foundations or associations, but are at least partly financed by the local and national government.

[10] Three projects had already started before the funding program.

[11] (Website funding organization, consulted 10-7-2015). The funding organization derives most of its funding through a charity lottery in the Netherlands.

Netherlands is responsible for gender equality policy – specifically donated money to the funding organization in support of the male-emancipation projects.

According to internal documentation, the funding organization initiated the program targeting male emancipation in response to a rising demand for funding by organizations that wanted to, or had already, set up projects for men. Minutes of meetings and other documents created in preparation of the program confirm that the funding organization observed such increasing requests to support projects focusing on "the participation and emancipation of (socially vulnerable) men" (Verkenning 2009: 4; van der Haar, van Huis, Verloo 2014: 16). In the projects for migrant women that the organization supported financially, participants were also requesting similar projects for men. The reasons for such demands, the documents state, were that women felt they were "surpassing" the men in their lives, which caused "unwanted situations" in which men hampered women's progress (Verkenning 2009). This shows how migrant women had an (indirect) voice in the reasoning behind setting up the projects.

In preparation for the program, the funding organization consulted both professionals who had already organized projects for men and "gender experts" specializing in social work for men. These experts helped ensure that the program description explicitly included masculinity and gender relations, and that the target group was broadened to include white Dutch men.

Before the start of the funding program in 2011, the male-targeted projects asking the funding organization for financial support mostly focused on *migrant* men (Verkenning 2009: 15). In their documentation, however, the funding organization argued that the program should not only target migrant men, because the Dutch gender gap in care concerned *all* men. This gender gap had not shown any signs of narrowing in recent years (the document references the 2006 edition of the *Emancipatiemonitor*, a gender equality study on carried out every two years by The Netherlands Institute for Social Research). A reference in the documentation to research on social isolation highlighted that it were not just migrant men who were socially isolated, which was an additional reason to also target non-migrant men (Verkenning 2009: 6, referring to Machielse 2006). Furthermore, the documentation argued that "assumptions about gender roles and masculinity" were part of the problem for both non-migrant as well as migrant men. This again shows that the funding organization connected a strong gender equality frame to the program, as well as a focus broadened beyond just migrant men.

The documentation also shows that class was added to the general target-group description (Verkenning 2009: 6), as a reference shows that they consulted research on socially isolated citizens which indicated that "low socio-economic class" was associated with a higher risk of social isolation (Verkenning 2009: 6, referring to Machielse 2006). Rather than limiting itself to a target group with migration backgrounds or to ethnic-minority citizens, the funding program thus included a focus on class, which in both internal and public documents is specified as focusing on men with "low education" levels (Achtergrondinformatie 2010).

Criteria for access to funding

The preparatory meetings and consultations with "gender experts" and professionals from existing projects for men resulted in a program description, which was made available to the organizations that applied for funding (Achtergrondinformatie 2010). The program communicated the application criteria to social-work and civil-society professionals. According to this document, the projects' target groups had to be: men who were "low educated", "socially

isolated", migrant and non-migrant, but preferably in "a mixed setting", and aged between 15 and 65. All of these criteria needed to be met in order to be eligible for funding. As their project goals, the interventions should aim for their participants' greater "participation" and "emancipation" by encouraging men to "participate in society", "break through traditional gender roles and norms within relationships and family"[12], and "reflect on their identity and behaviour as men" "and on the role of masculinity in the way they function" (Achtergrondinformatie 2010).[13]

In the next section, I will show how professionals related to these criteria, and how they framed their specific target groups, problems, and solutions.

2.2 PROFESSIONALS' FRAMING OF TARGET GROUPS, PROBLEMS, AND SOLUTIONS

The professionals set out their proposals for social interventions aimed at improving the participation and emancipation of targeted men in their project plans. In doing so, professionals showed what they understood as "their" target groups, problems, and solutions (interventions and goals). They also explained how they met the criteria that were set up by the funding program in order to get funding. Analysis of the project plans of the projects that were ultimately granted funding reveals there are two separate problem–solution nexuses. The first connects the problem of "social isolation" to "participation" as a solution, whereas the second shows how professionals frame "traditional values" as a problem and see "emancipation" as a solution. Before I discuss these nexuses I will discuss the way professionals demarcated their target groups.

2.2.1 TARGET GROUP DEMARCATIONS

The target groups of the projects were (implicitly) demarcated along dimensions of class, ethnicity, and gender. These demarcations followed the "low educated", "socially isolated", "allochtonous and autochnous" men demarcations, that were set up by the funding organization, but there were differences as well.

Implicitly targeting working-class men

The way professionals framed target groups in relation to class differed from their framing in the funding organization's program description. Whereas "low education" levels were part of the funding program's demarcation of the target group, most project plans did not include it in the description of their target group (only 4 of the 23 did note "low education"). In the four cases where low education *was* mentioned, it was mostly not further explained why men with low education levels needed to be addressed. Although most projects did not address education

[12] As noted in the introduction, in the Netherlands the term emancipation is mostly associated with women's emancipation.

[13] There were 84 applications and 23 projects were selected for funding (van der Haar, van Huis, Verloo 2014).

levels, many projects did localize their activities in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods[14] or disadvantaged rural areas. This localization became especially clear in the interviews, as professionals explained where their projects would be located and why (I1; I3; I4; I6; I7; I8; I9; I10; I11; I16; I17; I18; I19; I21; I22; also in a project plan: P23).[15] The next fragment (from an interview with a male white Dutch professional) reveals an explicit division between neighbourhoods, with one sort framed as "in need of attention":

> *C neighbourhoods are the neighbourhoods that need the most attention; A and B neighbourhoods can manage themselves (…). North is a typical C neighbourhood (…) in North we have the best chance of succeeding, so that's where we'll start. (I19)*

"Succeeding" in this case meant reaching the "right" men, men who were seen as in need of, or be reachable for, such a project: residents who could not "manage themselves" like they could in A and B-neighbourhoods. In another interview, a professional (white Dutch woman) related the disadvantaged neighbourhoods to specific social problems, explaining that these neighbourhoods have "the lowest income, the highest number of school dropouts, many single-parent families." (I6).

Locating the projects in disadvantaged neighbourhoods can be seen as a way to reach the low-educated and working-class men who were seen as in need of such a project. They were seen as more problematic than men from middle-class neighbourhoods. Moreover, these neighbourhoods often had more residents with migration backgrounds, which made it easier to access migrant men, who were problematized in other ways than non-migrant men (see also 2.2.3).

In most of the project plans, (18 out of 23), social isolation was explicitly part of the description of the target group. And most of the professionals who did not mention social isolation in their project plan explained in interviews that their target group could be seen as socially isolated (I4; I8; I16; I21). A professional from one of those projects stated that the young men from their target group were not socially isolated, but that they were not socially active in the "right environment": "they are socially active in the street and doing negative things" (I15), referring to loitering and criminal activity. In other projects, social isolation was defined as unemployment, ethnic segregation, loneliness, and/or a lack of (the right) social network. Because it was an important part of the projects' problem definition, I will further discuss social isolation when I present my analysis of their framing of problems and solutions (see 2.2.2).

Mixing "allochtonous and autochtonous" men

According to another criterion of the funding organization, the projects had to be aimed at both "allochtonous" and "autochtonous" men, preferably in a mixed setting (Achtergrondinfomatie

[14] Though half of the projects took place in smaller cities and in rural areas, the other half were organized in larger Dutch cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague). It should be noted, though, that the particular neighbourhoods in these Dutch cities in the Netherlands should be seen as less deprived than in other parts of the world (for example the French banlieues, American ghettos, or Brazilian favelas), as there have long been housing policies in place to mix income groups.

[15] I refer to interviews with professionals using the shorthand "Ix" and to project plans with "Px", with x referring to my number for the project.

2010). In their project plans and interviews professionals often used the same terms, though some framed their target groups more specifically by referring to several national, regional, or ethnic categories. One project, for example, described their target group by naming the many national or regional backgrounds of their target group, in addition to more explicitly problematic "Dutch" men: "Antillians, Kurds (Iraq), Moroccans, Turks, Somali, Bengali, Afghani, West-Africans, unemployable Dutch men" (P13). This framing of target groups suggests that non-migrant Dutch men needed to have a greater distance to the labour market (they need to be "unemployable") in order to be included in the project, and that migrant men were more self-evidently problematic; problems in those cases, according to this project plan, concerned segregation and "traditional values".

Other projects chose to keep their target group as general as possible, not specifying the ethnic or migrant backgrounds of their targeted participants (P4), while at the same time localizing the project in a neighbourhood with a population high in migrants and low in socio-economic class.

Five projects focused on more specific groups of migrant men (P15 & P16: Caribbean men; P5: Somali men; P18: Turks and Moroccans"; P20: "Hindustani men"), arguing that this was necessary because of the specific problems these men face. One project plan, for example, argued that Somali men were in need of specific attention because of their traumatic refugee backgrounds and because existing differences between members of different Somali clans caused troubles within the local community (P5; I5).[16] This last example shows how groups that may seem specific and homogeneous were also diverse in their backgrounds. Despite their diverging from the criterion of preferably mixing migrant and non-migrant men these projects were still selected for funding.

Fathers and sons as target groups

A large part of the projects focused on fatherhood and therefore included fathers in their target-group description (8 of the 23 projects). The expectation was that men could relate to the topic of fatherhood and raising children, because many men are fathers. And since all men have fathers or at least a conception of fatherhood (I23), some projects that focused on fatherhood also welcomed non-fathers to participate.

Another reason to make fathers as a target group, according to some professionals, was that fathers have a special role in the family, and that their (emotional) presence or more particularly their absence is a factor in some youth (especially boys) getting "off track". In one project, a professional intended to emphasize "the unique role of fathers in the family", which she saw as different from that of mothers. She framed men as a role model for boys and as a "stability factor" within the family (I4), articulating a strong "difference" frame between men and women.

Fatherhood was seen as an entry point to reach men, both to discuss fatherhood as a special role, but also to talk about other topics, for example about who makes decisions in a relationship (I6).

[16] No hyphenated or double-identity ethnicity labels appeared in professionals' framing. This is currently not a common way of referring to migrant ethnicities in the Netherlands, although there are some recent changes in that direction, for example in the recent (since 2013) official way of referring to ethnic groups by the municipality of Amsterdam (Hoekstra 2015).

Professional 1: Our starting point is raising children, but from there I hope we can make it broader (….)

Professional 2: You can get interesting conversations about whose word is law. How do those things play out? (I6)

These professionals (both white Dutch women) expected that gender equality issues would emerge from conversations about upbringing. Therefore, fatherhood became the central demarcation of the target group for this project.

Furthermore, it is important to note that projects specifically focussing on fatherhood mostly had men with migrant backgrounds as their target group (6 out of 8 fatherhood projects). The two other projects for fathers did not specifically focus on migrant men, but one of them was located in a neighbourhood with a large percentage of (post)migrant residents (I4).

Why exclusively for men?

In accordance with the funding program's agenda, professionals framed men as their projects' target group.[17] Not all projects argued why projects targeting men were needed. Some professionals hightlighted fundamental problems with gender inequality that required the specific involvement of men and therefore needed a gender-specific approach (P23; I23). Some professionals explained that they had seen such problems with gender inequality in their encounters with migrant women, who told them that the men in their lives were holding back their progress (I6; I9; I12; I15; I16; I17; I22). Others argued that organizing projects exclusively for men was a way to achieve a certain balance in terms of the number of social projects organized for men and for women (I1; I12; I18).

According to some professionals, having only men in a project had certain pragmatic benefits over mixing genders, as it would be easier to let men connect to each other and speak openly in male-only projects (I1; I6).

A male (white Dutch) professional from an organization that organized community-service work for unemployed people (with diverse ethnic backgrounds) had set up a men's centre in an empty old school building. He explained that working exclusively with men would result in a different "dynamic" in which men can be "vulnerable", which in this case was framed positively.

I think that when a woman is present at a meeting, that some men want to make an impression, and will behave more toughly, more proudly, or more macho. And when that woman isn't there, then you can start to spar, to confront each other, but it has a different

[17] Non-binary understandings of sex and gender do not appear in the framing of both the funding organization and their projects.

> *dynamic, you know? And I also think that it enables them to talk about men's issues in a safe way, and to be vulnerable… while that is not what you want to do when women are around. A women's group functions differently than a men's group (I1).*

This professional not only framed gender-specific groups as pragmatic, he also articulated a "difference" frame in which men are presented as having a fundamentally different way of communicating than women. There was a shared expectation among some of the professionals that it would be easier to talk about gender issues openly without women around (although not all expressed such a strong difference frame). The assumption was that bringing women and men together would lead to unwanted conflict: women would blame men for unwanted behaviour, and men would defend themselves (I1; I15). Professionals saw it as less problematic to have a female professional in front of the group, although many did look for an additional male trainer when the main professional organizing the project was a woman (I15; I13; I16; I7; I22; I12).

Other professionals doubted whether it was necessary to focus only on men, and they expected unwanted effects if these projects would exclusively target men in the long run. A white female professional from a welfare organization saw this gender-specific approach as a temporary solution at best: "Because (….) it is very difficult to get them out of their own boxes, out of that categorical way" (I12). The professional saw projects exclusively for men as a temporary solution to bring balance, because there were more projects for women than for men. She considered bringing men's and women's groups together over time.

Besides the target-group descriptions above, some projects focused on specific age groups, with the assumption that the men would better connect within their age group, as they would have similar problems and wishes (Age 15-25: P20; I20; Fathers of young children: P8; I8; Young fathers: P15; I15; Fathers and teenage sons: P23; I23; Senior men, 55+: P18; I18). Other projects focused on men with specific problems. In one project, organized by a mental-health organization, mental illness was included in the target-group description ("psychologically vulnerable men" P14), and another project focused on homeless men (P2).

In summary, the professionals' target-group descriptions referenced socio-economic disadvantages, although the target groups were mostly not explicitly framed as such. Either target groups were framed as "vulnerable", or projects were located in specific disadvantaged neighbourhoods, both of which were ways of implicitly targeting socio-economically disadvantaged men, but also a way to reach migrant men. The planned target groups mostly were men with (diverse) migrant backgrounds, combined with non-migrant men. Only some professionals aimed to work with specific ethnic target groups (for which the funding organization had provided funding despite the fact that these projects diverged from their criteria). In a large part of the projects (8 of 23), target groups were specified as fathers, or as fathers and sons, with the father role seen as an entry point. Furthermore, all projects exclusively had "men" in their target-group descriptions. Professionals explained that their target groups had fundamental issues with gender equality, as voiced by migrant women they had spoken with in other projects. They also saw a need for balance, because there was little being done for these men compared to their female counterparts.

2.2.2 Problem–solution nexus I: Social Isolation and participation

One of the main problems the targeted men faced, professionals said, was social isolation. Social isolation was the overarching term used to indicate problems ranging from unemployment, to ethnic segregation, loneliness, and a lack of (the right) social network. The use of the term social isolation to cover all these issues can be seen as a way in which professionals adapted strongly to the criteria and the main goal of the funding program. In the broader neoliberal context it is also a term used in Dutch social work and policy, in which social workers have been tasked to encourage "inactive" citizens to do volunteer work and ultimately, if possible, seek paid labour (this will be elaborated in 2.3).

The problem of social isolation: a problem for men themselves, a problem for women, or a problem of non-conforming?

In the professionals' framing, social isolation was a broad concept covering many problems. Social isolation was framed as a problem of inactivity, a problem of segregation, a lack of social capital, and/or a problem of loneliness. It referred to non-conformity as well as the negative emotional wellbeing of men themselves, with negative consequences for women too.

Social isolation was first of all framed as a problem of unemployment and not having other ('useful') activities, not being in school or doing volunteer work. Though it was not part of the funding organization's problem description (Achtergrondinformatie 2010), many projects mentioned unemployment as a central part of their problem definition (15 out of 23). The professionals' arguments for why unemployment was a problem included: saying that these men were being irresponsible towards society; explaining the perspectives and feelings of men who have emotional problems because of their unemployment; explaining the perspectives of women who live with men who do not contribute to their household despite the amount of time they spend at home.

Professionals strongly connected men's lack of emotional wellbeing to unemployment. Unemployment was presented as problematic because it resulted in a sense of "low self worth" (I2; P22), particularly for men, as they struggle with not conforming to the bread-winner norm (P2; P3). It was also framed as a lack of usefulness, both from the perspective of "society" and that of the men themselves. One plan of a project aiming to work with Turkish and Moroccan men over 50 said that these men "feel that society doesn't want them" (P18). According to the framing of professionals, unemployment led to "frustration" (I18; also: I12; I9). In other project plans, professionals stated that unemployment could lead to "pressure in the family" (P1; P13), implicitly referring to the frustration of family members, domestic conflict, or potentially domestic violence. In that sense, social isolation was framed as a threat to others, specifically to women and children.

Based on their experiences with working with women, professionals said that women faced problems due to the unemployment of their male partners, especially when men did not contribute to household work. According to professionals, there was, however, a difference in what men and what women felt were solutions to the problem of social isolation. Women would like the men to be educated about child-rearing or to do more household work, while men themselves were more interested in learning about ways to get back into paid employment:

> *Professional (white Dutch background): He sits on the couch all day and does nothing. There are men who are like that. Those women say: Try to do something about my husband… And we say we'll try, but* you *have to try as well.*
>
> *Interviewer: That's what women ask, but do you also have men who ask… who want to do more…?*
>
> *Professional: Yes, absolutely, but in that case they're very concrete: education, work. (....) There are no men who tell us: God, I'm not emancipated at all, can you emancipate me? But there are men who come for schooling, for work and for help. (I12)*

Although the demands from women who wanted men to participate more in household tasks or become more active in other ways formed an important impetus behind the project, this fragment shows that, according to professionals, the reason men gave for taking part in the project was to get help participating in education or work. This shows that both the professionals and the women's arguments included gender equality goals, while the men's arguments for participating in these projects were very different.

In some cases, unemployment or inactivity was framed as a specific problem of migrant men. In the next example, a male professional with a Somali background explains how the growing hostility in Dutch politics towards refugee migrants was seen as a problem by the men in this target group (Somali men with a refugee background). These men, according to the professional, needed to try their best to conform, and to participate in (volunteer) work, in order to prevent greater hostility.

> *It is really their last chance. Let's be honest. Dutch politics has changed, to the disadvantage of this group. Society says: Enough is enough. Whether you like it or not… When I arrived here myself, refugees were welcome. (…) Of course there were people who were against [refugees/immigrants] all along, but generally that was a taboo. In the current context, people would rather want refugees to leave than that they come here. So, in that sense I say: Guys, politically you also have no sympathy. The only thing that can save you is to roll up your sleeves. You have to create your own sympathy. That's what I say to them, and some are not stupid. They get it: There is no more patience. We have to do something, and we should offer them a platform to show everybody: This is the man I am. This is the man I was, and this is the man I want to be. (I5)*

This professional stated, that since "Dutch politics" or "society" has changed (to be more restrictive and less welcoming for refugees), all Somali refugees could do is try even harder to conform. He also explained this was difficult because many of these men were dealing with wartime trauma (I5).

Aside from unemployment and inactivity in volunteer work, professionals also framed social isolation as a problem of ethnic segregation, of "retreating into their own community"

(P13). The reasons professionals gave for problematizing ethical segregation were the growing hostility towards migrant communities on the one hand, and the growing hostility within migrant communities against white Dutch majority on the other (I18), as well as a lack of knowledge and resources to solve problems (I17).

Related to both the inactivity and segregation above, social isolation was also framed as a social-network or social-capital problem, argueing that a lack of contact with others (within or outside of their own ethnic group) made it more difficult to get help or to find (re)employment (I1; I5; I10; I11; I13; I15; I17).

Lastly, social isolation was seen as an emotional problem, a lack of human contact and meaningful relationships (I1; I2; I9; I13; I14; I16; I18). Thus social isolation was closely connected to men's lack of emotional wellbeing, including loneliness and a low sense of self worth: "[There is] loneliness among men (….) because of social cultural exclusion" (P22) (I1; I2; I9; I11; I12; I14).

This focus on men's (lack of) wellbeing shows how professionals tried to see the problems from the men's perspective from the start of the project (I1; I2; I3; I4; I5; I9; I11; I13; I14; I15; I16; I17; I22). The professionals also addressed social isolation's negative consequences for women (men's unemployment and inactivity, and "tension in the family"), but men's problems received the most attention.

Only some of the projects included discrimination as a problem men experienced (P11; P16; P18). Yet professionals did not relate this to social isolation. Remarkably, in two of these cases discrimination was framed as a feeling, rather than as a real experience. The implication of seeing discrimination as an emotional problem was that the only solutions that were suggested were ones aiming to do away with feelings of discrimination, rather than trying to do something about discrimination itself. An exception was a project that pointed out stereotypes about Afro-Caribbean men and aimed to have men develop ways to relate to and counter these stereotypes, which was a more enabling way of relating to oppressive (external) identities and could in that sense be seen as a counter-narrative (especially in relation to dominant discourses that will be further explained in 2.3).

In summary, social isolation was a broadly used concept to refer to different types of exclusion and inequality, predominantly concerning unemployment and related feelings of exclusion, including loneliness. It was furthermore framed as a social-capital/network problem and a problem of segregation. Although being discriminated against could also be put under this broad concept of social isolation, professionals did not do so. Discrimination was framed as a separate problem by some, and in two of those cases framed as a feeling rather than a structural problem or experience. Opposing discrimination and dealing with stereotypes in more resisting ways were elements of a counter-narrative only found in the framing of one project.

Social isolation (in the meaning of unemployment/non-participation) was framed as not conforming to social norms, while men's perspectives and their low self-worth were also highlighted. There was some attention for the perspective of women, who according to professionals struggled with men's inactivity in the household despite their (un)employment situation. The framing of the men having a low self-worth is logically connected to the professionals' need to empower them. Unlike telling them to conform and/or to not hamper women, this focus on what the men want opened up possibilities to connect with them.

Solutions: participation and individual empowerment strategies

As a main project goal, all professionals in one way or another noted "participation" as a solution to the problem of social isolation. In project plans, professionals stated that they wanted to encourage "participation in society" (P1; P6; P10; P12; P13; P18; P19; P20), or they framed their goals as stimulating "active citizenship" (P16) or "contributing to society" (P22; P17). A more specific formulation used in one project was "Active fatherhood in the neighbourhood" (P4), linking the focus on fatherhood to the participation goal.

Professionals specified what they meant with participation by stating that they aimed to lead participants to social activities, volunteer work, paid work, or educational trajectories, or to make men more aware of their "role in society" and to let them reflect on ways in which they would like to contribute (P15; P20). Professionals aimed to teach participants new skills, for example by offering classes on the Dutch language, basic computer skills, or social skills. Some professionals specifically planned the participants' meetings or sports activities in the morning in order to let the men pick up a daily working routine (I1; I2; I9; I13). Professionals explained that they were experienced and well equipped to empower and encourage men to have more active lives. Many used a model, an imaginary "participation ladder", that helped to indicate which steps to take in order to become an "active citizen". One in three project plans referred to the "participation ladder" as an instrument, a way for professionals to measure the participants' "progress". The ladder is a model Dutch municipalities use (100 of 393 Dutch municipalities used the model in 2011) to measure and encourage "progress" in citizens' "participation" (van Gent *et al.* 2008). The ladder consists of six steps, the lowest being "social isolation" and the respective next steps "social contacts outside of the house", "participation in organized activities", "unpaid work", "paid work with support", and "paid work". Social workers encourage citizens to take steps on the ladder, and the assumption is that each step will lead to the next. Doing unpaid work, for example, should lead to paid employment. The lowest step on this ladder, "social isolation", is described as "hardly having contact with other people than members of one's own household" (van Gent *et al.* 2008: 12). The participation-ladder model (re)produces the idea that men (and women) located on the lowest steps do not conform to a norm and that they need to be guided in the right direction. In project plans, non-participation therefore was a self-evident problem, and the solution was to take the next step on the ladder. For the most socially isolated men, the project would mean a step higher on the ladder and a way to get to the next steps.

The projects often emphasized volunteer work over paid work (P1; P3; P7; P8; P9; P13; P14; P17; P18). The reason behind this emphasis was that professionals were more familiar with ways to get people involved in volunteer work, while finding paid employment would not be seen as a task for a social worker and more a task for unemployment agencies. Moreover, according to both the professionals' framing (and the participation ladder), volunteer work was seen as a self-evident step towards paid work. According to professionals, some of the (potential) participants were not (yet) suitable for paid employment. Though in those cases there was an assumption that unpaid work would eventually lead to paid work, research on (mandatory) "volunteer" work performed by unemployed people in the Netherlands shows that such steps on the "participation ladder" are not self-evident and that volunteer work can actually *prevent* people from taking up a paid job (Kampen 2014).

Encouraging men to do volunteer work was done through empowering them in group work, but also by emphasizing the men's responsibility for contributing to society. In the project plans, encouraging "active citizenship" and "personal responsibility" were both positively framed. Asking men "to help out" in community work was seen as a way to get men more closely attached to the project (I1; I4; I11; I14). In the quote below, the solution to the problem of social isolation that is presented, calling on the men's sense of responsibility, is also attributed a specific masculine character, pointing to moral codes of strength and leadership. The male professional (with an Afghan background) felt that (unemployed) migrant men needed to assume a masculine responsibility befitting the current Dutch context.

> *With us it is important that you fulfil the role you had in your country of origin… that you retrieve that, within another meaning of course. For example a father, or the role of a man in the family, was very strong in countries like Afghanistan, Turkey, or this and that… , but we can give that a positive meaning in this society. Do not give up on that role because the customs are different here, no! Actually there is no different role here, but a different meaning. You can give it another meaning. Where is your manliness if you don't take responsibility? You have forgotten your role in your country of origin. You shouldn't forget it, but give it a different meaning. (I1)*

The cultural norm of responsible, strong masculinity was taken up as an argument to convince men to be active and to have a more active role in society in a way that conforms to participation norms. The social worker quoted above thus encouraged the normalization of men to an active citizenship in a way that he expected to be acceptable to the men with migrant backgrounds (homogenizing non-European migrants' cultures and masculinities). He did not frame the change as assimilation to a new norm, but as a slight adaptation of the masculine responsibility they supposedly embraced in their countries of origin.

In contrast, professionals "helping" participants was negatively framed, using terms like "pampering" (I1; I9; I13) or "smothering" (I12). In one case "help" was even explicitly framed as "a repulsive word" (I1). The reasoning the professionals gave was that empowerment happens through a process of activation, whereas helping can prevent people from taking action themselves. Additionally, there was an explicit gender difference in terms of the framing, as men are specifically not supposed to be (overtly) helped, but should be asked to help others. In one case, "not helping" participants was framed as adapting to the masculinity of participants: "A man just doesn't want to be helped" (I4).

As an alternative or counter narrative, some (but fewer) projects did not include such a strong emphasis on participation, criticizing the participation ladder and the way other welfare and reintegration organizations operated because they led to an even more problematic situation: "They should stop pushing people at all costs" (I11, I7). One professional, for example, explained that she and her colleagues wanted to keep possibilities open for persons to "fall back again", or that it might be impossible for some to participate in paid employment, because of their strongly marginalized locations, and that in her experience people did not go from one step

on the ladder to the next (I11; I5). In that sense, some professionals saw the male-emancipation projects as an alternative to the dominant social work approaches of responsibilization, which "blame" the men for their own marginalized positions: "It's a positive project, not one approached like: You don't have a job, you don't have money, you are doing something wrong" (I4).

Overall, at the start of the project professionals were prepared for, and had experience with, activating potential participants. They had access to, or had developed, instruments and working methods for empowering men and letting participants reflect on activities after the project. They concerned themselves with the emotional wellbeing and self-identification of men, and how this impacts on their environment (mostly meaning women). The way the professionals framed it, it was the breadwinner norm combined with inactivity that caused low self-esteem. This negative self-identification needed to be countered by taking steps on a "participation ladder", the highest step of which was the norm of paid employment (or self-employment). In the project context, the way to get there was by, with the help of social-work professionals, participating in group work, learning skills and feeling stronger, and by participating in volunteer work.

2.2.3 Problem-solution nexus II: "Traditional values and behaviour" and emancipation

Looking at the project plans, the second main problem frame that emerged can be described as "men's traditional values and behaviour". A majority of project plans (19 out of 23) noted "traditional values", "traditional normative images about masculinity", "old gender roles", or comparable notions as problems that the projects wanted to address. Though what exactly encompassed "traditional" varied, it was used in a (mildly) negative way, implying that said values or behaviour were out-dated and in need of change. The solution for these issues was "emancipation", a concept that was defined in various ways and generally broader than challenging traditional values and behaviour alone.

Problematic "traditional values and behaviour"

In project plans, "traditional" men were often contrasted with (migrant) women who were described as "emancipated" or "taking steps forward" (resp. P13; I12). The contrast helps understand what professionals meant by "traditional", as professionals mentioned the progress of "emancipated" women included: getting an education, developing skills, having more job opportunities (I16), being empowered, acting as equals to men (P11), as well as having acquired "knowledge" about child-rearing (P6).

Professionals stated that, as these men lack education, skills, and job opportunities compared to women and as these men do not see themselves as equal but superior to women, this caused conflict, tension, and even domestic violence (P1; P9; P16). The contrast between "traditional" men and emancipated women gave the men a low sense of self-worth because they were "lagging behind" compared to women (P1; P9; P10; P11; P13; P17; P19). In this sense, the emancipation of women turned out to be framed as an important part of the problem

disadvantaged men face, especially combined with their own traditional values. According to one project plan, men do not have a "suitable answer" to this development, which makes them "hold on to old gender roles"(P17).

Many projects framed problems of men's "traditional values and behaviour" as a problem for women. Professionals stated that men hampered women, for example by preventing women from "applying new knowledge and ideas about child-rearing" (P6), but also in "developing themselves" (P1; P18). Moreover, professionals argued that traditional values that became increasingly different from women's values created "tension" and "aggression" in families (P1; P9; P16).

Some professionals contrasted the men's gender roles and values with the dominant Dutch social norms, thus framing the problem of "traditional values" as one of non-conformity to Dutch society. One project, for example, explicitly stated that the gender roles of their target group did "not conform to the expectations of today's society"(P20). Moreover, by framing "traditional" as a problem, professionals implicitly framed men as not (yet) living up to contemporary social norms.

Traditional gender roles and values were furthermore framed as a problem of fathers not being involved enough in the upbringing of children (or not involved the "right" way), making them not only problematic for men and women, but also for their children. These problems were framed in project plans as: "lacking communication with children" (I5), "no sustainable relationship with children" (P16), or "a low share in the care and upbringing of children" (P4). Occasionally, projects linked this non-involvement of fathers to problems with loitering youth (I8).

In the rationale of some professionals, the "traditional values" of men also hampered the men themselves. Some professionals framed certain narrow conceptions of what it means to be men, such as machismo behaviour, not being able to talk about problems, not seeking help when in trouble, and not being tolerant towards homosexuality, as "traditional" and harmful to men themselves (I2; I15; I18; I23). A professional who focused on young Antillean (Afro-Caribbean) fathers stated that a "macho mentality" was part of the problem, defining that mentality as: "free sexual morals and not taking responsibility for one's children" (P15). Afro-Caribbean men's masculinity in that sense was problematized differently than that of Muslim men who supposedly were hampering their wives and daughters' progress, or white Dutch men (which was not further specified).

Another project that worked with Afro-Caribbean men flagged similar problems, aiming to address stereotypes rather than "traditional values": "Antillean and Aruban men have a reputation of being, among other things: irresponsible, womanizing, aggressive, criminal, lazy, and easy-going". This professional (Afro-Caribbean background) presented these as negative images the men were forced to relate to. Their stereotypical reputation, according to her, had a stigmatizing and paralyzing effect, and the project aimed to give the men a more active strategy to deal with such negative images (P16).

In some cases, professionals noted that the men from their target group had expressed their own motivations to change (I5; I16). A (male) professional with a Somali background, who worked with men with a Somali refugee background, explained that men from his target group saw their women were making "progress" and expressed the need to adapt to this progress, especially because the women were increasingly asking for divorce (I5). He used a Somali expression to explain how the men feel that change is inevitable: "If the contractions start, you

cannot hide what is coming: For men, the contractions have begun" (I5). In that sense he voiced the men's own wishes to adapt to women's progress, even if it was for their own benefit: so as not to lose their wives.

In many cases in which traditional gender roles or values were framed as a problem, these problems were attributed to migrant groups. Problems were ethnicized and gendered in the sense that they were attributed to men from specific ethnic or national backgrounds, or more generally to "allochtonous" men (which can be considered ethnization if we see "allochtonous" as a broad ethnic categorization). The problems were also culturalized in the sense that culture was seen as a problem, as something that needed to change (professionals phrased it more mildly as something that needed to be "reflected upon"). This combined (broad) ethnization and culturalization, for instance, explicitly occurred in one project plan that framed "traditional views" as a problem specifically connected to "allochtonous" women and men (P13):

> *Women and girls stress in increasingly pressing ways that the traditional views of men and boys stand in the way of their emancipation and that it gives rise to tension in their families. There is an increasingly louder call from allochtonous women in our groups (....) to do something with or for their men. (P13)*

Sometimes the projects' ethnization happened implicitly because a project focused on a specific ethnic group and its expected stereotypical problems. As mentioned earlier, one project's problematization of Afro-Caribbean men's free sexual morals, machismo, and lack of involvement in the family, which is an example of such implicit ethnization (P15).

In rare cases, problems were ascribed to culture and gender but not ethnicized. Some of these projects framed traditional gender roles as a general problem for migrant as well as non-migrant men (I23, I7). Two projects made note of the "breadwinner" norm as something to which some men were not able to conform and that therefore became problematic (P2; P10). Although this concerned problematizing a norm and learned practices, and in that sense could be characterized as a cultural problem, it was not framed as part of any particular ethnic group, but as a problem of masculinity at large (P2).

Furthermore, some professionals framed problems as being broader than just concerning social or cultural norms related to ethnicity or gender. Some project plans described the tension and low self worth triggered by a combination of social problems related to a low socio-economic position (unemployment, segregation, stigmatization, lack of meaningful contacts) as causes of aggression and violence within families. This shows how some professionals tentatively saw certain men's specific problems with aggression and violence (directed against the women in their surroundings) as being affected by their intersectionally disadvantaged and privileged positionings/locations.

In summary, one of the main problems professionals framed was "men's traditional values and behaviour". The roles, patterns, or values that were considered problematic were gendered: claiming men are supposed to be breadwinners and women should take care of the children and household, men do not need to be involved in child-rearing, men deciding over women's lives,

machismo behaviour and violence. For Afro-Caribbean men there was more attention for machismo and lack of involvement in the lives of children, while Muslim men are framed as standing in the way of their wives and daughters. Some "traditions" were thus seen as problems of specific ethnic groups, and white Dutch men were only in some cases included in the (culturalized) problematization of "tradition", though this was hardly ever done in an elaborate way. An alternative frame or counter-narrative was provided by one professional who wanted to counter stereotypes by letting men reflect on these stereotypes and aimed to teach men ways to respond to stereotypes in empowered ways. Furthermore, the "traditional values and behaviour" of men were mostly framed as a problem for women, and sometimes also as problems for men themselves. Not being able to conform to "traditional values and behaviour" would be "frustrating" for men and narrow understandings of how to be a man could be constraining women as well as men. The "traditional" was moreover framed as a problem of not conforming to existing Dutch values and behaviour, which are in the process implied to be somehow "non-traditional".

Solutions: male-emancipation frames, limited strategies

Emancipation was one of the two main goals (the other being participation) listed in the program description of the funding organization. The directions for change that the funding program suggested in relation to emancipation were: "developing an awareness of one's role as a man and the role of masculinity in one's own behaviour", and "breaking through traditional gender roles and norms within relationships and in the family". In the project plans, the emancipation and participation goals turned out to show more overlap. Two main frames can be distinguished in the professionals' narratives about (male) emancipation.

The first male emancipation frame I found was a *two-sided gender equality* frame*,* which meant that emancipation was considered to be beneficial to both men and women. Within this frame, male emancipation involved diminishing male privilege as well as the negative consequences of privileged positions, the costs of masculinity (Messner 2000). Professionals framed the men's problems in the context of their socialization as men. Besides privileges, this socialization also involved certain costs for men. The two-sidedness of gender equality emancipation, according to one professional, worked like a "zipper" (I17) (another uses the metaphor of a "mirror" (I7)): in order for men and women to develop "to their full potential" and for (heterosexual) men and women to develop more equal relationships, both men and women have to make concessions. Men would have to allow women to develop themselves through education and employment, and women need to allow men to do household tasks and to be involved in the lives of their children (I17; I22).

More practically, this two-sided gender equality frame suggests that men (in families) would have to be encouraged to be more involved in less stereotypically masculine practices, in care work like child-rearing and doing household tasks. They would also have to be encouraged to stop hampering women's progress. To achieve these goals, men would need to be granted more opportunities and be liberated from constraining norms; this so they could, for example: build stronger emotional bonds with their children, be allowed and able to express their emotions, talk about problems, and be less intolerant towards homosexuality.

For the professionals, the term emancipation also had a connotation with autonomy and therefore needed to be something men choose for themselves. In the project plans,

emancipation therefore also meant: "gaining the space to give your life your own direction" (I17). Professionals thus aimed for a self-instituted change towards gender equality, and many of them had positive expectations about this aim. The assumption seemed to be that when men become more aware of their own behaviour and norms and more consciously make choices about their behaviour, these choices would benefit women as well.

A (white) male social worker who in the 1970s worked with (white) women on emancipation and now worked for an organization that was involved in integrating migrants defined male emancipation as follows:

> *Developing your own skills, capabilities, being less focused on the rigid capabilities that they [men] think they should draw on, less of a masculine profile, more attention for being a man in the broad context of society. Paying attention to your family, paying more attention to what your family is doing. Broader than the rigid patterns (...) It's about understanding each other better (…) having attention for each other, being more respectful about our relationships with each other (I19).*

This quote shows that the professional framed male emancipation as improving men's lives through the development of less rigid masculine practices, as well as by being more involved in the family and having more equal relationships with (female) partners. The professional moreover emphasized the (more equal) change in communication between partners, which thereby resulted in a more respectful and equal intimate relationship.

A community worker (a man with an Egyptian background) from another project was more concrete in his articulated aims. He connected the following issues to emancipation:

> *You have to talk about these things on a basic level. Who puts the children to bed and why? How does this work? If you don't put the children to bed, how do you talk to them? How do you connect with them so that, later, if they're loitering on the street, you can still talk to them. Or do you think you are feminine when you talk with your children about how things are going at school? Or, for example: What do you mean with 'I am the boss in the house'? Why would you ignore your wife? Doesn't she have an opinion? These discussions are very important. (I3)*

The issues this community worker related to emancipation implied that male emancipation meant a greater involvement of men in the family, including an emotional connection with children and an equal relationship between partners. The narrative also implied an aimed goal of successfully disciplining children (especially boys).

The second framing of male emancipation I describe as the *advancement of men*. The men's own empowerment and participation is key here and does not necessarily have anything to do with gender equality. The aim of professionals who framed emancipation as such, was to look at what

men themselves needed, to make them feel stronger, and to take away constraints and give them the possibility to have more active lives. It also includes "getting away from the victim role" (I5, female social worker with a Turkish background) and "gaining self-respect" (I3, a male community worker with an Egyptian background). The ways in which men were "emancipated" according to this frame should be seen in the context of intersecting inequality dimensions, advancing men who are from a disadvantaged ethnic group or/and from lower class environments.

In the following quote two professionals explain what they see as emancipation for men:

Interviewer: What does emancipation mean for you?

Professional 1 (Afghan background): Becoming stronger, in the most banal terms, in common language… it's becoming stronger.

Professional 2 (white Dutch background): For me, emancipation means being active… active in your role as a man, as a person, your self-image, being aware of what happens in society. 'I am a part of society too'. Contributing to society. 'I am here as well'.' How can I show that I am here? By applying myself. (I1)

Although there was no attention for gender equality in this framing of the advancement of men, there was an implicit gendered side to what the professionals were saying. Activating men, according to the narrative in the quote above, happens (partly) by reaffirming a strong masculinity (also: I3; I23; I7). Within this frame there was an emphasis on strength and agency, both of which could make men feel more included by conforming to the moral masculine codes of being active and having a responsible role.

Some professionals combined the two-sided gender equality framing with the advancement of men framing, emphasizing what the men themselves wanted, while taking others (women) into account. In the next example, a female professional explains that, to her, male emancipation involves both being aware of one's own desires and possibilities and "welcoming those of others".

I: What is emancipation for you? Male emancipation?

P: What I myself think is important … I mean, every man should of course say so for himself… I think it is important that you feel happy in society and that you are able to take the steps you want to take, but that you also take into account… Well, for example the environment you are in. (…) That you take your chances, but also don't hamper others, and let them take their chances as well. (…) For me personally, emancipation can be found in being aware of being a person who can continually learn something, who can grow, make decisions about themselves, and give others space as well, …to welcome others to the same (I13).

This quote shows a combination of enabling men as well as the others around him, which could refer to women but could also other (disadvantaged) persons. Simply not hampering others, however, is quite a passive way to enable the advancement of women.

The quote again emphasizes the importance of autonomy when using the term emancipation: "every man should of course say so for himself". This way of speaking about participants again highlights the wish to encourage the agency of men, which is an important part of both emancipation frames.

In the next example, a female professional (Afro-Caribbean background) takes the cultural background of her target group into account and relates the intended changes in gender equality to the emancipation of men (advancement of men) from a specific ethnic group.

> *Male emancipation [is] when men consciously think: 'Now, I'm going to make something of my life. If a man (...) walks behind a stroller, an Antillean man behind a stroller. If he picks up the child from school and goes to parent-teacher meetings. That to me would be a step towards the emancipation of these men. If they go to the municipality and say: This is my experience, these are our problems, that to me is emancipation... because we have learned that men are not allowed to cry and not to talk about problems. Once they do that, emancipation starts. (I16)*

This professional aimed to let the men stand up for their issues, to be involved in their families, which she framed as a liberation from certain masculinity norms. If she had not highlighted the agency of men themselves the framing could be seen as an ethnization of the problem of gender inequality, with assimilation as its solution. By using the term emancipation and highlighting the men's own choices she transformed the framing into one that is less assimilating and more enabling.

I did not find male emancipation framed in any way explicitly aiming to bring back or reinforce male privilege, nor did I find gender equality framed as only benefiting women. Both the emancipation frames described above take into account what the men themselves want as a way to reach emancipation. Although the above examples make note of the disadvantages of men, and in a way also the disadvantages of being men from an ethnic minority, none of the project plans or professionals explicitly frame male emancipation intersectionally in an way that takes into account their own structural disadvantages in combination with addressing the participants' privileges as men.

Despite framing male emancipation in a way that emphasized gender equality, there were few concrete plans that described how these gender equality goals could be reached, and several professionals stated they would not use the term emancipation in their communication with potential participants and would be very careful in how they discussed gender equality out of fear of "scaring away" men (I6; see also: I3; I13; I19). In project plans, the emancipation aims were often vaguely described, for example as: "creating awareness of gender roles", "creating awareness about the role in the family" (P6), "creating more positive forms of masculinity"

(P23), or "breaking through gender roles" (P20; P1). There were hardly any indications as to how professionals aimed to achieve these goals.

In interviews, it became clear that many professionals perceived the gender equality goal as more difficult than the participation aim, and that at the beginning of the project most professionals were not sure yet what they could or would do to reach the gender equality goal. As a professional from one of the women's organizations that had organized a project for men said:

> *So, we will see… what kinds of activities we should do with these men, how to really get to the core. Our way of doing this [with women] has always been talking – dialogue, conversations – but we have to look for new methods (I22).*

The lack of precise methods addressing gender equality stand in clear contrast to the clearly defined participation goals. As we saw in the previous section, there were quite precise ideas on how to encourage men to participate in volunteer work.

Because of their framing of emancipation as a self-instituted change, some professionals expressed the need to let participants influence what topics should be discusssed and therefore left their work methods on emancipation (including gender equality) open at the beginning of the project (e.g. I2; I6): "I don't know what to offer, if we don't know what they need (I21)". Professionals thus took a bottom-up approach in which they would ask the men what they wanted to discuss.

There were some exceptions. One professional who had been working with men for longer, for example, explained that she worked with visual aids, such cards with questions or images, which she used to guide the men to talk about gender equality issues (see Chapter 4 for how this worked in practice). The same professional also wanted to involve a homosexual professional in the project in order to open up conversations about the topic of homosexuality, which she saw as part of the process towards more gender equality (I16; also I15).

One way of working with men on the topic of gender equality had been introduced in a meeting organized by the funding organization in 2011, when the funding program had just started (some already knew the approach and had included it in their project plan). A male trainer with experience in social work for men had created a list with "codes": statements that say what men should and should not be like. The underlying idea was that men are raised in a way that teaches them to conform to these codes and that awareness of the codes can help to understand certain problems that are caused by conforming or not conforming to these codes. The codes were social norms about masculinity, including ideas about men being competitive, aggressive, independent, and experiencing intimacy through sexuality. The codes moreover said men do not seek help and do not like to see themselves as victims. Codes are formulated in statements such as: "I am supposed to earn a living for myself and those who depend on me".

In the interviews, professionals from 16 of the 23 projects stated that they were planning to work with these "codes of masculinity". There was great variation in how professionals planned to use them, however. Some planned to use the codes behind the scenes, as a set of "facts about men" that helped them develop strategies on how to reach men, for example by

asking their help, rather than offering help (I1; I11; I22; I15), because according to this list of "codes" men do not like to be helped. Others planned to confront the men with the codes and to use them as a trigger to talk about gender relations (P2; I13; I23).

There was also criticism. Some professionals said the list was too generalizing and had experienced different codes in their work with men. They for example did not recognize that men do not ask for help or express their feelings (I18; I21). Another professional said that it would only make men feel worse about themselves if they were confronted with codes that say men are supposed to have a paid job (I18). (I will further discuss the use of these codes in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1).

In conclusion, the traditional-emancipation nexus shows that the frame "traditional values" or "traditional behavioural patterns" was used to problematize masculinities that were seen as harmful for men as well as women. The progress of women was framed as a problem for men. The framed solution, however, was not to return to the "traditional" situation, but to let men emancipate. Yet (male) emancipation had a variety of meanings in the professionals' framing, with some focusing on improving the situation of women as well as men (*two-sided gender equality frame*) and others on the improvement of the individual lives of participating men themselves (*advancement of men frame*), an improvement that shows overlap with the participation goal (see 2.2.2) and has a strong conforming character.

The advancement of men frame furthermore shows a disconnect with the "traditional values and behaviour" diagnosis, leaving the project without an articulated solution/prognosis for the framed problem of "traditional" men and the way they hamper women.

2.3 Political and discursive Dutch context

In order to be able to analyze the way the framing of target groups, problems, and solutions reflects or resists dominant discourses, I will discuss the discursive and political Dutch context in which the projects took place, after which I will relate these contexts to the framing (in 2.4).

2.3.1 Men and gender inequality in the Netherlands: included, excluded, culturalized

Including and excluding men during the second wave of feminism

In Dutch feminism and gender equality policy, the focus has been on women. Yet men do have a history in Dutch feminism, specifically concerning the problematization of men's traditional values and practices (Ribberink 2012; Noordenbos 2008). At the start, the Dutch second wave of feminism was relatively inclusive of men, while in later years women organized more separately (de Vries 1981; Ribberink 2012), followed at the beginning of the 21st century by a focus on migrant women (Roggeband & Verloo 2007).

The article by Dutch feminist Kool-Smit (1967) that is seen as the start of the Dutch second wave of feminism addresses the unfinished emancipation of women after the first wave of feminism: The rights to vote, to university education, and to have paid employment did not

lead to equality in the division of care and work. Highlighting women's unfulfilling lives as housewives or in jobs with little perspective, Kool-Smit called on women to stand up for their interests and have a stronger "fighting spirit" in order to get equal pay and equal work positions. Kool-Smit mostly addresses women as being responsible for this change, while men are implicitly criticized for not hiring women, for paying women lower wages, and for not contributing to household work (1967). Besides these implicit critiques, the article is quite understanding of men's oppressive behaviour, for instance male employers' antipathy towards women and their unwillingness to hire women, which she understands as stemming from women's "lack of ambition". While she describes how men are implicitly part of the way inequality is understood, the article also sees men as being disadvantaged by class inequality themselves. The article notes the way many men are also disadvantaged as subordinated workers, which is exemplary of the close link between Dutch feminism and socialism during the second wave.

Following the 1967 article, Kool-Smit (together with Hedy d'Ancona and others) founded Man Vrouw Maatschappij (MVM), an organization fighting for women's emancipation and "equal development opportunities for men and women". Originally only made up of women, the organization, which was briefly named *Vrouwen 2000* (Women 2000), aimed "to break down walls between men and women (whether married or unmarried) by making women and men's roles interchangeable". This shows that the organization aimed to adapt not just the roles of women, but those of men too. The next year, the organization decided to include men as well and changed its name to MVM: Man Vrouw Maatschappij (Dutch for Man Woman Society).

The MVM organized working groups to discuss issues and tried to influence policy by lobbying and by consulting for politicians, mainly on education and women's labour participation: advocating for more possibilities for part-time work, day-care facilities, equal opportunities in education, equal pay, equal taxes, and more (van de Loo 2005: 76).

Between 1976 and 1982, there had been a working group for men within MVM, called "Willem word wakker" (Willem, wake up!). The group discussed the role of men in society and aimed to rethink their "traditional role" as breadwinner and to let men feel and express emotions. The group stopped in 1982 because of lack of interest and a "lack of action" (van de Loo 2005: 71), and, according to one of the early members of MVM, because "men had a lot to lose, while women only stood to gain" (Buma 1988: 3).

Though men were a minority in MVM[18], they have been characterized as influential and as dominating, according to some, who believed the presence of men and what these specific men stood for – for example putting socialist ideals first – prevented the organization from forming a critical view on gender inequality and patriarchy (de Vries 1981; Ribberink 2012).[19]

Men were also involved in another well-known and quite visible organization from the Dutch second wave, Dolle Mina (Crazy Mina). The organization, founded in 1969, organized playful public campaigns for gender equality inspired by Dutch student activism and feminist activism in the US. The issues raised by this organization were: unequal access to education,

[18] According to one of the early members, 10 to 15% were men (Buma 1988: 3).

[19] Kool-Smit (later Smit) continued to address issues in the MVM years, including some ideas about the role of men in gender equality. She saw an equal division of work and care as one of the ways forward, highlighting the benefits for women as well as men. She argued that women and men are both responsible for change, as she saw inequality as the result of activity as much as passivity. A "more connected" role of men in the family would allow boys to identify with a man within the family and to develop less harmful attitudes towards women (Kool-Smit, Misset & Engelsman 1969).

inequality in marriage, lack of day-care centres (which prevented women from working), abortion rights, and unequal pay. Along with women, the men in this organization developed the founding ideas and participated in activism. Dolle Mina criticized men's roles in society indirectly by addressing the women's issues mentioned above, but they also addressed them more directly by pleading for an equal sexual morality (van de Loo 2005: 83) and the abolishment of military service for men.[20]

These and other women's organizations furthermore had close connections with gay-rights organizations, which also included men; there were male feminist writers, feminist magazines to which some men also contributed and even a feminist magazine that was started by a man (*LOVER* was started by Jeroen de Wildt). All these organizations and initiatives had overlapping objectives and joined forces in demonstrations for women's issues, in which men joined in as well (van der Loo 2005: 166).

In 1973, under the influence of a more radical feminism, men were excluded from being board members of MVM, which led to some of the influential men (and co-founder Hedy d'Ancona) leaving the organization (Ribberink 2012). The organization continued to be active until 1988, after which many of its members remained active in other gender equality organizations.

In the mid-1970s, women started organizing separate women-only consciousness-raising groups with stronger focus on the ways in which women were oppressed by men (de Vries 1981; van der Loo 2005). At the end of the 1970s, MVM and Dolle Mina started to lose members to these groups. Where earlier gender inequality had been framed as unequal rights and inequality in work and education, these women-only groups developed more articulated ideas about the ways men oppressed women, which they saw as the fundamental basis of other types of oppression (Ribberink 2012: 4).

Some men started organizing separately. From 1984 until 1995, there was an organization (SOMAN) with a therapeutic character that was inspired by feminism and that reflected on ways patriarchy had negative consequences for men. They received funding from the Dutch government in 1990 and organized conferences and courses, mainly aimed at social workers, that reflected on masculinity (Noordenbos 2008: 136).

In terms of policy, the Dutch government formulated gender equality goals from 1974 onwards (Dutch Parliament 1976-1977, 14 496, nrs. 1-2: 7). One of the first emancipation plans of the Dutch government was developed in close cooperation with the women's movement (van de Loo 2005: 78) and included the aims: "to break through the limitations of gender roles for women and men; to overcome relative gaps; improve women's rights, their level of education, and their participation in society; and to increase men's role in the personal sphere", and "for women and men to more positively value characteristics and activities that are traditionally linked to women" (Dutch Parliament 1976-1977, 14 496, nrs. 1-2: 10). Despite the attention for men in the plan and in contrast to the policies that helped women participate to a greater degree in the labour market, there were no policies for men (Dutch Parliament 1980-1881, 14 496 nr. 42).

The work of Dutch feminists changed laws and regulations and helped increase the number of women participating in the labour market, mostly through part-time jobs. They also addressed the lack of childcare facilities, which made it difficult for women to work fulltime, though this only changed relatively late, at the end of the 1990s (Cloïn, Schols & van den Broek

[20] https://www.atria.nl/nl/publicatie/dolle-mina (consulted 26-8-2016).

2010: 7). This emphasis on part-time work combined with the Dutch moral standards for motherhood (van den Berg & Duyvendak 2012: 559) has contributed to a specific gender division in care and work that is labelled a one-and-a-half breadwinner model (Lewis 2001; Ciccia & Verloo 2012), with most men working fulltime and adding more hours when they have children, while women working less when they have children and occupying small part-time jobs with less career perspectives (Merens & van den Brakel 2014: 93).

Gendered culturalization: migrant women as victims and migrant men as "harmful"

During the 1990s and early 2000s, a time in which migrants in general were highly problematized, the attention in both gender equality policy and debate shifted from white women to migrant women (Roggeband & Verloo 2007). Problematizing migrant cultures was not entirely new (Bonjour 2009: 76; Vink 2007; van Reekum 2014), but this particular moment saw a stronger emphasis on framing culture as being problematic. Before the 1990s, cultural identity was presented as empowering for migrants, enabling them to find a strong position in society. A two-track policy had been developed in the Netherlands in which a double focus on social-economic integration and cultural identity was underlined with the motto: "integrating while maintaining one's own identity" (Dutch Parliament 1969-1970, 10504, nr.2: 10; Driouchi 2007: 17). Long part of the Dutch government's refusal to see itself as an immigration country, a key argument for maintaining one's identity had been to facilitate the eventual return to one's country of origin. The policies included language courses to teach immigrants' children the language of their parents' country of origin. In reality, however, many labour migrants who were recruited from Turkey, Morocco, and other Mediterranean countries were not returning, and refugee immigration was also rising (Bonjour 2009: 218).

In the 1990s, right-wing politicians marked both cultural relativism and (fundamentalist) Muslim culture as a threat (for example by Dutch conservative-liberal leader Frits Bolkestein in De Volkskrant 12-9-1991). Left-wing politicians and political parties cooperated with those from the right to make immigration laws stricter, and mandatory Dutch language and civic integration courses were introduced. These courses were at first mainly focused on increasing self-reliance and socio-economic integration, but later more on cultural integration (van Huis 2005; van Huis & de Regt 2005).

Public debate intensified in 2000 after an influential opinion piece by labour party politician Paul Scheffer depicted Islam, and Moroccan youth especially, as problematic. He painted Islam as a threat to an open liberal society that would not respect the separation of "church" and state (referring to threats of fundamentalism and the Rushdie affair) and Moroccan youth as a threat to Dutch neighbourhoods (Scheffer 2000). He also called for Dutch people to take their language, history, and culture more seriously in order to have something to offer to migrants (2000). The negative labelling of Muslim immigrant culture in the debate increased even more after the suicide attack on the Twin Towers and other attacks in Bali, Casablanca, Istanbul, Madrid, and London (Roggeband & Verloo 2007: 272). The political rise of the right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn, who fiercely criticized Islam and Muslim immigration, and his murder by a white left-wing Dutch activist, as well as the murder of Theo van Gogh (a filmmaker also critical of Islam) by a Muslim immigrant also led to more critiques of (radical) Islam (Verkaaik 2010; Roggeband & Verloo 2007).

This intensification of the public and political debate on immigration and integration was accompanied by a stronger emphasis on culture (Roggeband & Verloo 2007: 281; Geschiere 2009; Duyvendak, Hurenkamp & Tonkens 2010; Verkaaik 2010; Uitermark 2012). Politicians increasingly expressed the idea of a "failure of multiculturalism" and framed social problems as being related to immigrants' cultures.[21] Altogether, it became clear that a culturalization of citizenship had been taking place since the 1990s, shifting away from the socio-economic integration of migrants to a cultural integration with increased attention being paid to migrants' values and practices, especially regarding attitudes and practices concerning gender equality and (the acceptance of) homosexuality (Mepschen *et al.* 2010; van Huis & de Regt 2005).

The rationale in public debate and policy reversed completely from one that understood socio-economic integration as leading to cultural integration, to a causal understanding in which a change in culture would lead the way to socio-economic integration (Roggeband & Verloo 2007: 281). In order to legally as well as morally be accepted as a Dutch citizen (Schinkel 2008), migrants had to adapt to "Dutch values". Cultural integration was in that sense also seen as an important goal in itself. This culturalization of citizenship can also be seen in the way migrants are addressed in political debate and policy (Geschiere 2009; Duyvendak, Hurenkamp & Tonkens 2010; Verkaaik 2010; Uitermark 2012).

Furthermore, the culturalist discourse had a strong gendered character. Women were framed as the victims of "their culture" and the victims of men within their community (Roggeband & Vliegenthart 2007: 536). Men were framed as the ones hampering women's progress, being a nuisance in the streets, being involved in criminality, threatening to safety by becoming drawn to fundamentalism, and being bad fathers (Roggeband & Verloo 2007). Especially boys with Moroccan backgrounds were framed as problematic in discussions in media and politics (Binken & Blokland 2012; Muller 2016).

Integration and emancipation policies thus became strongly focused on migrant women, as they were seen as both victims and entree points into the family (Roggeband & Verloo 2007). Migrant women, and both their participation in society and their attitudes regarding gender equality, became central in integration as well as gender equality policy, which made it appear as though gender equality was solely an issue for migrant women, and that non-migrant white women's as well as white men's emancipation[22] had already been completed (ibid.).

From "harmful" migrant men to "vulnerable" men

From the 1990s until 2007, the role of men in gender equality did not get much attention. While there was a media campaign addressing the role of men in the family in 1997 that stirred up some discussion, no policies were developed. In 2003, the Christian Democrat MP Nihat Eski argued in Parliament for the need to invest in "allochtonous" men, making them aware of "equal chances" and "equal responsibility in child-rearing and care tasks" (van der Haar 2013: 218). At that time, however, the Minister for Integration, Rita Verdonk, saw more "integration potential" in women, and policies continued to be strongly focused on migrant women. In 2005, repeated

[21] Immigration and integration, and especially issues of culture, became the topics of the most important Dutch political debate of the beginning of the century. Some politicians were mainly preoccupied with criticizing immigration, integration, and Islam, while others focused on Moroccan immigrants (for example Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, Verdonk, and later Wilders).

[22] Men's emancipation in the most commonly used Dutch meaning of men's role in gender equality.

pleas by Eski and Naïma Azough (Green Left) gained the support of other parties, but they did not lead to any gender-specific policies for men, until 2007 (ibid.).

That year, the 2007-2011 Integration Memorandum stated that "the emancipation of women is hindered by the traditional views of men". To do something about this "hindrance" the memorandum stated that "boys and men *from ethnic minorities*" needed to "emancipate themselves" (ibid.: 219; my emphasis). The same year, this memo was followed by a "Plan for the Man" which received criticism by left-wing MPs for only focusing on migrant men. A new letter by Ronald Plasterk, the Minister responsible for gender equality policy, explained the plan in further detail, repeating the framing of the problem as the "traditional views of men" which "can slow down the emancipation of women" (ibid.: 219; Dutch Parliament 2008-2009 30420 nr. 128: 3). To this framing he added a new perspective, addressing the problem of the "vulnerable and isolated position" of men themselves. He concluded that these men were vulnerable and isolated based on his own "conversations with men from ethnic minorities" (van der Haar 2013: 220; Dutch Parliament 2008-2009 30420 nr. 128: 4).[23]

The letter provides a clear contrast to the ways in which men should be "emancipated" popular in framings before 2007. Before Plasterk's letter, the aim was to stop men from hampering women and do something against men's "traditional values". In the letter the "traditional values" and hampering of women remain problematized, but it adds an additional problematization of the "vulnerability" of migrant men (van der Haar 2013: 220). This change in framing also reveals a different understanding of the concept of "emancipation". Where it at first could be seen as involving men in a *two-sided gender equality* (which was actually a one-sided gender equality, because it only concerned preventing men from harming women), it now concerned the *advancement of men themselves* as well (see 2.2.3 for these two male-emancipation frames).

The policy suggested in the "Plan for the Man" and Plasterk's letter was opening so-called father centres in 14 municipalities. Men's identity as fathers was seen as an entry point, just as the role of mothers was in previous policies. Men would be encouraged to "take up their role as partner, father, and educator" and "actively participate in society". The policy thus also implicitly framed fathers who were failing to discipline their sons as a problem. Father centres were also supposed to encourage contact between allochtonous and autochtonous men (van der Haar 2013: 220). In that sense, the "vulnerability" frame shifted from migrant men to working-class (unemployed) men, but the location of the projects in municipalities with a high population of Moroccan descent showed that cultural background was still seen as a key part of the problem (ibid.).

Mixing "allochtonous" and "autochtonous" men

Migrants and migrant cultures thus have increasingly become a politicized issue since the 1990s.[24] At the same time, specific minority policies that encouraged immigrants to integrate "while maintaining their cultural identity" have lost credibility (Driouchi 2007: 17; van Reekum &

[23] In the same year, 2007, the Green Left MP van Gent introduced a Government proposal (initiatiefwetsvoorstel) to extend paid paternity/partner leave from two days to two weeks. Neither this proposal nor a new proposal for one week of paid leave in 2010 was able to achieve a majority in Parliament.

[24] See Bonjour (2009) for an extensive analysis of how the politicization of (family-reunification) migrants developed between 1955 and 2005. Her analysis reveals earlier signs of the ways in which cultures of migrants were seen as problematic.

Duyvendak 2012: 448).[25] In a move away from minority policies, the terms "allochtoon" and "autochtoon" were introduced, while at the same time migrants, especially those from "non-Western countries", became the centre of political debate and policies.[26]

The use of allochtonous and autochtonous that is unique for the Netherlands (with the exception of Belgium) requires some further explanation. In reference to immigration, the nouns "allochtoon" and its counterpart "autochtoon" became more commonly used after a report by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) in 1989, and even more so after adaption in 1999 by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) (Yanow & van der Haar 2013).[27] Statistics Netherlands started to use the terms as categories to collect standardized information about immigrants and their children. The CBS defined (and standardized the definition of) an allochtoon as someone with at least one parent who was born outside of the Netherlands. The more specific category of the "non-western" allochtoon was reserved for migrants with a background from non-European countries.[28] Furthermore, children of "allochtonen" (plural of allochtoon) were referred to as "second-generation" allochtonen, and their children as third-generation (Yanow & van der Haar 2013; Paulle & Kalir 2014: 1359).

The terms are now widely used in common Dutch language and in policy texts to distinguish between migrants and non-migrants in a way that often distinguishes white Dutch people from non-white (post-)immigrants. The use of the term "allochtoon" until the third generation especially points to this broad ethnization or racialization of the term.

The term allochtoon can be seen as having fulfilled a need for a label which would not emphasize ethnic or racial minorities and still make it possible to collect data about migrants, monitor them, and talk and write about them. Targeting migrants and ethnic otherness was moreover encouraged through government funding of policies and research, whereas social class, for example, was relatively neglected (Paulle & Kalir 2014: 1359). Although the allochtoon/autochtoon labels were at the time a welcome alternative to a multicultural minorities approach, they were later criticized for their polarizing, "othering", and stigmatizing effects (Yanow & van der Haar 2013: 21; Paulle & Kalir 2014: 1360). The term allochtoon has recently been officially rejected by the Dutch government, after it consulted with the Scientific Council for Government Policy and Statistics Netherlands. The term will be replaced by the descriptive phrase "persons with a migration background" and more specific references such as "employees with a Turkish background". The main objective of changing the language concerning migrants in recent years is to prevent "exclusion" (Dutch Parliament, 5 December 2016: 8).

In summary, over the years the role of Dutch men in gender equality has shifted from the time when a small group of progressive white Dutch men were a cooperative ally and had a facilitating role in a struggle against the "traditional roles" that were seen as a problem, to a time

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[25] The credibility of this two-track integration goal and of minority policies had been lost after facing criticism for not tackling problems and creating segregated minorities, for example in a report by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR 1989).

[26] "Allochtonous" literally means something originating from another place, and the term had been in use in geology to describe rocks or minerals that were carried from elsewhere by wind or water (Yanow & van der Haar 2013).

[27] They had earlier been used in reference to migration by Dutch sociologist Hilda Verwey-Jonker, who was instructed by the Dutch government to avoid the term migrant, because the Dutch government at that time did not want to present itself as an immigration country (Yanow & van der Haar 2013: 234; Rath 1991: 175; Geschiere 2009: 148).

[28] Non-Western in this case includes Africa, Latin-America, and Asia, with the exception of Indonesia (the former Dutch Indies) and Japan, though this group does include people from the (former) Dutch Antilles, which are still part of the Dutch crown and in some parts of which Dutch is still the official language.

when women started to organize more separately and men were more excluded, to the present day when migrant men are blamed for hampering migrant women. A gendered culturalist discourse emerged in which migrant masculinities are framed as hampering women and migrant men are expected to adapt to the supposed Dutch standards of gender equality and to discipline their sons.

More recently a new problem framing has appeared, that of the vulnerability of disadvantaged men, in which predominantly migrant men, but also working-class men more broadly, are seen as vulnerable and in need of emancipation policies complementary to the ones geared towards migrant women's emancipation.

2.3.2 New paternalism and communitarian neo-liberalism in social work

When a sense of urgency arose in the 1990s about immigration and disadvantaged city neighbourhoods with rising migrant populations (Uitermark 2012: 83), this also resulted in a reorientation of the role of social workers and other professionals who worked with disadvantaged populations. A new, active role was (re-)introduced with terms like "outreach", "pro-active", and "prevention" (Peeters 2013; van den Berg 2014; van der Lans 2011).

The Netherlands has a history of paternalistic social work, especially in the late 19th and early 20th century (de Regt 1995). In that era, lower-class families who were labeled as "anti-social" were taught, in coercive ways, to become civilized citizens and "decent" city residents. Community workers and supervisors from (pillarized[29]) welfare organizations and housing co-operations (mostly women) were tasked to teach residents about disciplined households and to responsible spending habits (ibid.).

In the 1950s and 1960s, immigrants and "returnees" from the former Dutch Indies, were also under strict scrutiny, and some of them were placed in boarding houses where social workers checked whether they were sufficiently assimilated (Schuurmans 2014: 39; Ramakers 1988). In the 1960s and 1970s, however, there was a general growing resentment against paternalism, and social workers developed new, more egalitarian ideas and ways of working with clients (Tonkens 1999). The post-WWII ideal of self-development, according to which professionals could lead the way someone would develop into "the best possible version of themselves", changed to one of "spontaneous self-development" that centred on individuals and the way they articulate themselves (Tonkens 1999). In the 1960s and 70s, facing criticism of paternalism, social workers tried to work in less coercive and intrusive ways. For instance, when an assimilation policy was suggested for new immigrants from Suriname in 1977 (the former Dutch colony that became independent in 1973, which led to a wave of migration to the Netherlands right before independence), social workers protested against the paternalist and assimilist approach the government's policy plan suggested. The policy plan was adjusted in 1978 in order to make room for these immigrants to meet and express themselves as a group as a way to gain a respected position in society (Entzinger 1984: 92).

[29] The (welfare) organizations were pillarized along the lines of Christian denominations and political backgrounds (Dercksen & Verplanke 1987).

Another development in social work was that welfare organizations in the 1980s became larger, more bureaucratic, and centralized under the influence of secularization (they used to be pillarized) and the more centralized national welfare policy due to the rise of neoliberalism (Uitermark 2012). Under neoliberal ideals, in the 1980s and even more in the 1990s, the Netherlands developed towards an increasingly free-market economy with a state creating and supporting an institutional framework that suited such an economy (Harvey 2005). At the same time, the rise of neo-liberalism meant that there was less support for people who might be in need of it. In other countries this change was often paired with more repressive responses to social problems and an emphasis on the individual merits and responsibility of citizens (Wacquant 2001). In the Netherlands, too, social problems became increasingly framed as the citizens' responsibility (Schinkel & van Houdt 2010: 700). Social workers started to emphasize this responsibility, offering less help and working in more hands-off, bureaucratic ways (van der Lans 2012; Uitermark 2012).

Around the same time – starting in the 1970s, but more and more in the 1980s and 90s – welfare policies started to focus on minorities (Uitermark 2012: 67). These minority policies aimed to monitor specific ethnic and social groups, offering them facilities to organize and preserve their cultural identity. The aim of this policy was to prevent the formation of marginalized ethnic minorities (ibid.; Entzinger 1975). Uitermark's research shows this policy was an act of "anxious paternalism rather than enthusiastic multiculturalism" (Uitermark 2012: 71). Supported by the minority policy, this era saw the development of categorical organizations, as well as (claimed) representatives of ethnic minorities (Rath 1991). This type of organizing along ethnic-minority lines was short lived, however. After it was criticized, alternative policies were suggested by an advisory government institution (Scientific Council for Government Policy [WRR] 1989). In 1997, minority organization lost their access to structural subsidies, which were replaced by project-based funding instead (Uitermark 2012: 178).

At the end of the 1990s, welfare work started to become more intrusive again, while the neoliberal discourse emphasizing "responsibility" remained. Unemployment that had risen among the immigrant population, and culturalist public debates led to stricter immigration and integration policies. The Dutch government had already introduced mandatory citizenship courses for new immigrants in 1994 (van Huis & de Regt 2005). And municipalities and welfare organizations now introduced house calls by social workers (Metaal *et al.* 2010; Peeters 2013); and migrant mothers were encouraged to participate in child-rearing courses (van den Berg 2013; van den Berg & Duyvendak 2012). Furthermore, social workers had an increasing number of clients, people in need of care who no longer lived in special facilities but in regular and mostly disadvantaged neighbourhoods because of austerity measures. Senior citizens, people with mental, cognitive, or other disabilities, or who were dependent on care for other reasons all became part of the responsibility of social-work professionals (Verplanke *et al.* 2010; Tonkens & Verplanke 2013).

The new paternalist methods encouraged social-work professionals to again actively look for and make contact with people who needed help or, speaking in the terms of the field, who "needed to be activated" and whose "responsibility" needed to be called on in order for them to become active citizens. Social-work professionals also articulated (new) less passive roles for themselves, developing techniques to work in "outreaching" ways (van der Lans 2012). Influenced by, and resonating with, neoliberal discourse, a "new paternalist" approach

(MacGregor 1999) thus became dominant in the Netherlands, and it had to be carried out using increasingly limited means.

Because it actively encourages citizens to take care of each other rather than the state simply not intervening in their lives, this type of neo-liberalism has been called a neoliberal *communitarian* discourse (Schinkel & van Houdt 2010). Communitarian here refers to a mode of governing with a focus on the community, albeit in selective ways that are directed toward assimilation in a neoliberal (becoming active citizens) and nationalist sense (becoming culturally assimilated) (ibid.). This paternalist communitarian approach makes the Dutch way of handling social problems different from more prominent neoliberal ways of dealing with social problems, for example that of the US, which combines a small state with repression and a high level of incarceration (Uitermark & Duyvendak 2008; Wacquant 2001).

In that sense, Dutch policy and discourse resemble the "Big Society" ideology that has become influential in the UK. The portrayed ideal is of active citizens who take care of those in need and a small, non-intrusive state that encourages such activism. Research by Verhoeven and Tonkens, however, shows that there are differences between the Netherlands and the UK in the way politicians argue citizens should participate in volunteer work. In the UK, citizens are addressed in a way that emphasizes a negative image of a large state, whereas in the Netherlands politicians do not criticize the state, but other, "irresponsible" citizens who are not participating. In the UK, a sense of "we" is created, whereas, in the Netherlands a individualist society is created by highlighting responsibility and by "blaming" other citizens for being irresponsibly inactive (Verhoeven & Tonkens 2013). Verhoeven and Tonkens note that the UK's Big Society entails norms regarding behaviour and feelings ("feeling rules") (Hochschild 2003: 102) of empowerment where in the Netherlands people are pushed to feel guilty when they do not conform to the ideal.

An additional characteristic of this paternalist communitarian neoliberalism can be found in the difference between the current new Dutch paternalism and the old paternalism in which social workers could set the rules. In current projects and policies, professionals work in negotiating ways (van Huis & de Regt 2005; van der Haar 2007; van der Berg 2013). In 1979, De Swaan already indicated that the Dutch post-war welfare state was changing from hierarchical to negotiating relationships, both within organizations and within the family (1979; 1981). The current situation is different, however, as it combines egalitarian views with a new paternalist approach. "Egalitarian paternalism" is what Van der Berg (2013) has called the current situation, in which social professionals see themselves unpaternalistically as equals to their clients but at the same time take up the role of directing their clients towards a "better" way of doing things. This idea of egalitarian paternalism does not neatly align with the "blaming" and "responsibilizing" frames that Tonkens and Verhoeven see as characteristic of the Dutch paternalist discourse. In that sense there is a dissonance between the way politicians articulate their paternalism and the way social professionals work (and frame their work). Politicians voice responsibility through feeling rules that blame others, while social workers try to "responsibilitize" and simultaneously presenting themselves as equals who do not tell others what to do.

In order to connect with clients in egalitarian ways, the social-work field has incorporated both migrant social workers and an "interculturalization" approach (van der Haar 2007). In social work (and health care), interculturalization is understood to be an approach that aims to make services accessible to all, including migrants, and a way to make social workers aware of, and sensitive to, cultural differences (and processes). These intrusive new paternalist

interventions are therefore not just carried out by white Dutch social workers. Social work, a female-dominated field, has become more ethnically diverse since the 1990s, as well as more aware of cultural differences (van der Haar 2007).

Ignoring structural inequalities, multiculturalism, and racism

While the culturalist and neoliberal communitarian Dutch discourse emphasizes (lack of) socio-economic and cultural integration, other social problems are addressed less often or even trivialized. Class inequality is currently less prominent in the framing of social problems (Paulle & Kalir 2014). Gender inequality has in recent decades been mostly associated with migrant women as victims and with migrant men as perpetrators, while white women's and white men's emancipation is framed as sufficiently complete (Roggeband & Verloo 2007). While ethnic inequality does get attention in Dutch politics and policies, they often highlight migrants as problematic, while racism and inequalities grounded in the (Dutch) colonial past are ignored. The way ethnic inequality and racism are discussed, ignored, and trivialized in the Netherlands requires some further explanation.

Though the Netherlands and its policies have been portrayed as multicultural by people who praise the multicultural model, more often they have been flagged as such by people arguing against it (Duyvendak & Scholten 2011). Multiculturalism has been depicted as a model for immigrant emancipation that precedes integration (Duyvendak & Scholten 2011), as a way to control migrants (Uitermark 2012: 71), and as a model that creates division and exclusion (Joppke 2007: 5; Koopmans 2003; Sniderman & Hagendoorn 2007: 5). The multicultural model is often linked to the Dutch history of pillarization (roughly between 1920-1960), in which social life and institutions were organized according to "pillars" of Christian denominations and political preferences (Lijphart 1968/1975). Some see the Dutch experience with the Holocaust, in which little was done to prevent the deportation and killing of Jews, as one of the reasons why multiculturalism was adopted and developed as a model in the Netherlands; immigrants were seen in this guilty light, and critical views on immigrants were labelled as xenophobic and racist (Sniderman & Hagendoorn 2007:2).

Because of the politicized use of the term multicultural it has become questionable whether multiculturalism should be used as an actual model by which to understand the Netherlands. The most important argument against it is that Dutch multiculturalism was in fact short-lived and limited compared to the country's past pillarization.[30] National multicultural policy only really developed during the 1980s and was officially abandoned in the 1990s (Duyvendak & Scholten 2011; Uitermark 2012). It was originally developed to control minorities rather than to empower them or to celebrate differences. Moreover, some scholars have argued that the Netherlands has not been characterized by a sensitivity to racism that could have reinforced a multicultural model, but has instead mostly ignored race and racism (Essed & Trienekens 2008; Ghorashi 2006; Wekker 2016). According to these scholars, only narrow, overt,

[30] Koopmans has showed that some forms of organizing along the lines of cultural groups has a path-dependency because of past pillarization. Some broadcasting organizations or Muslim religious schools, both made possible because of Dutch laws and regulations dating back to pillarized times, offered such possibilities, for example. Furthermore, there have been forms of (subsidized) organizing along ethnic groups in local policy, also after the 1990s, which according to Duyvendak and Scholten (2011) have pragmatic reasons and should not be seen as being derived from multicultural ideology.

and intentional cases of racism and discrimination are acknowledged in the Netherlands, and even in cases concerning verbal expressions of racism they are often defended under the banner of freedom of speech. Furthermore, the Holocaust is not only used as an argument to oppose racism, it also puts up a very high threshold that makes it difficult to accuse someone of racism in the Dutch context. Visible racism, such as the yearly holiday custom of "Zwarte Piet" blackface (which is not always intended as racism) is defended under the guise of "tradition". Moreover, the discrimination of immigrants is not necessarily seen as racism in the Netherlands, but as discrimination based on having a migration background (a version that is somehow more acceptable). The Dutch colonial past is hardly seen as a relevant topic to reflect on, particularly in the context of social inequalities (Goldberg 2006; Essed & Trienekens 2008; Ghorashi 2006; Vasta 2007:727; Essed & Hoving 2014; Wekker 2016). Especially after 9/11 and the rise of Pim Fortuyn there has been a strong emphasis on "not mincing one's words" and a strong backlash against political correctness (Prins 2002; 2004). Any criticism of structural inequality is often waved away, especially when it concerns racism or ethnic inequality (Hondius 2009; 2014: 274; de Leeuw & van Wichelen 2014: 348).

Grounded in this trivialization of ethnic inequality and befitting of neoliberal discourse, individual freedom and achievement by merit are framed as ways forward, while structural inequalities are ignored or trivialized. In social work this means that clients are approached as individuals and not in a way that takes structural inequalities into account – unless there is a need for a categorical approach in order to control certain groups.

In summary, in a declining welfare state that is increasingly neoliberal, Dutch politicians and social workers are currently focused on the cultural integration of immigrants (and limiting immigration in general) and increasing the participation of citizens in paid and volunteer work. The ruling discourses in the Netherlands are culturalist and neoliberal communitarian, with new (egalitarian) paternalist policies being articulated and practiced. These discourses can be found in the way social workers carry out (state) policies to activate and integrate citizens who are seen as problematic because of their cultural background or because of their non-participation. Social-work professionals carry out policies encouraging citizens to assimilate and participate according to culturalist and neoliberal standards, while they at the same time receive less funding to do so. And though social workers work in egalitarian ways that at first sight are less paternalistic than the dominant discourses in Dutch politics, they still push citizens in normalizing and assimilating directions. The current dominant discourses have moreover contributed to the trivialization of ethnic and class dimensions of inequality, and almost exclusively look for gender inequality among Muslim migrant communities. Within these dominant discourses, ethnicity is a concept that is mostly helpful for blaming immigrants and their cultures for their own and especially women's disadvantaged positions, not for indicating the structural and historical roots of inequality.

2.4 UNDERSTANDING THE PROJECTS' FRAMING WITHIN THE DOMINANT DUTCH DISCOURSES

The dominant discourses that are articulated in Dutch politics, policy debates, and social work can also be recognized in the way the male-emancipation projects studied here frame their target groups, problems, and solutions. In some cases they also formulated alternative frames that stood in opposition to these dominant discourses.

The targeted groups were working-class, mostly unemployed men in disadvantaged (segregated) neighbourhoods. For many projects the target groups were fathers. They were migrant and non-migrant men, sometimes a mix of both, but there were also more specific homogeneous ethnic target groups.

The specific attention for migrant men and fathers can be understood as a reaction to earlier policies and projects' almost exclusive attention for migrant women (Verloo & Roggeband 2007) and as a continuation of the kind of framing also present in the governmental father-centre policy (van der Haar 2013). This policy offered a discursive context for a funding program that would both discourage men from hampering the progress of women and girls, as well as empower the more "vulnerable" men (ibid.). A large number of the projects specifically focused on fathers, which resonates with the father-centre policy that frames fatherhood as a way to connect to men and provide access to the family. The other projects did not specifically focus on fathers but on men in general or young men specifically. In that sense, the male-emancipation projects were complementary to the father-centre policy in their attempt to reach more (types of) men.[31]

The use of the "*allochtoon*" and "*autochtoon*" categories to describe target groups and the preference to "mix" the two in projects should also be seen against the backdrop of the Dutch political and policy discourse, in which minority policies had lost credibility. By framing "allochtonen" and "autochtonen" "preferably in a mixed group" it became possible to target migrants without exclusively targeting them, a light de-ethnization of social problems. This a careful move away from exclusively targeting migrants could mean a move towards a more socio-economic understanding of problems. The framing of "low-educated men" or men in disadvantaged neighbourhoods also points to the idea that social class is carefully (re)gaining ground as a frame through which to see social problems instead of exclusively targeting (post)migrants, but this is hinted at rather than fully articulated.

Aside from this "mix"- frame, some projects worked with specific groups instead, arguing that such an approach was necessary to counter specific problems their target groups were facing. The fact that the funding organization allowed room for these projects shows that such specific projects are sometimes still seen as relevant.

The social isolation-participation nexus in the Dutch discursive context

The way professionals frame their target groups' problem as one of social isolation and believe its solution is participation and responsibilization resonates with the broader neoliberal Dutch

[31] References in documents of the funding organization show that the father centres were seen as good examples, though the male-emancipation projects were also seen as complementary to the father centres because the projects were not only for fathers (Verkenning 2009).

context of communitarian new paternalism described above. This framing of problems and solutions can be seen as articulations of the current role of social workers in the Netherlands. Social workers are expected to encourage "inactive" persons to become active citizens. To encourage (unemployed) people to do volunteer work is part of the daily routines of social-work professionals. By emphasizing "participation" and "responsibility", the professionals articulate a dominant neoliberal frame of what is expected of citizens. In this neoliberal communitarian discourse, citizens are expected to work and take care of others, rather than having a state that takes care of the people who are dependent on the care of others. The projects can be seen as interventions that (aim to) carry out these neoliberal communitarian practices and in this way normalize the men in question in accordance with the dominant discourse. Their other aim is to let target groups participate in a way that will help raise their self-esteem, which shows that there is more going on than just making non-participating citizens conform to existing norms.

In both the project plans and the interviews, unemployment and inactivity are not only framed as problems of not conforming, but also as things the men themselves experience as problems. Professionals, rather than frame their own role as one of telling participants what to do, frame their role as one of guiding men towards certain changes the men want for themselves. Connecting to men by looking at problems from their perspective, while at the same time trying to make them conform to dominant norms resonates with the kind of egalitarian paternalism also seen in other policies (van den Berg 2013: 216). The reluctance to practice a more authoritarian paternalism can be seen as being due to criticism of earlier paternalist ways of working.

There is another way in which this connects to neoliberalism: for some of the organizations, funding by an external (but state-related) funding organization has been a way of dealing with the government's cutbacks to the structural financing of social work and civil society. Cutbacks made the organizations dependent on project-based funding, while there used to be more structural funding.

The ways in which discrimination is framed as a feeling strongly resonates with dominant Dutch discourses that trivialize people's experiences of discrimination, especially if they come in more subtle forms (Essed & Hoving 2014; Wekker 2016). The projects strongly individualize problems (including discrimination), which also resonates with the neoliberal discourse in which success is the result of individual merit and hardship is hardly ever related to structural inequalities.

Though there are fewer of them, there are also professionals who formulate alternative frames or counter-narratives, and who criticize the way municipalities and other welfare or reintegration organizations currently operate for being too strict and for pushing men further into problematic situations. These professionals did not "blame" or "responsibilize", but take into account the way disadvantage and stigma limit the opportunities of their target groups.

The traditional-emancipation nexus in the Dutch discursive context

The projects' attention for men's "traditional values and behaviour" and their aim to "emancipate" men should be seen within the longer history of Dutch feminism and gender equality policy, but also in the context of culturalist discourse, neoliberal discourse, and egalitarian paternalism.

The projects framed "(male) emancipation" in two distinct ways: 1) a (two-sided) gender equality frame which meant to improve the situation of women by involving men more and meant to improve the situation of men sidelined by gender inequality; and 2) an advancement of men frame which aimed to ensure that the men themselves were empowered and encouraged to (fully) participate in society (see 2.2.3). None of the projects framed male emancipation as merely to the benefit of women, nor merely to the benefit of men in a way that (intentionally) oppresses women. None of the projects aimed to deliberately work against gender equality or strengthen traditional roles. In that sense, gender equality or feminist discourses were implicitly part of professionals' framing.

Since the 1970s, emancipation policies have also aimed to "increase men's role in the personal sphere" (Dutch Parliament 1976-1977, 14 496, nrs. 1-2: 10) besides improving women's rights, education, and (labour) participation. However, the goal of increasing men's role in the personal sphere has hardly ever been developed into policies, and although more women work today than 40 years ago, there still is a strong male (one-and-a-half) breadwinner norm; although most women work part-time, most men still work fulltime, especially when they have children. This lack of experience with including men in achieving gender equality also explains the absence of clear plans to address gender equality, revealing how recent and underdeveloped the aim to engage men in gender equality is in the Netherlands, this despite the attention there was for men during the second wave. In contrast to their goal of advancing men, most projects did not have clear plans on how to start talking about gender equality.

The problematization of the "traditional" values of (especially Muslim) immigrant men in the projects more strongly resonates with the recent dominant policy and political context in the Netherlands. Since the 1990s, there has been a strong problematization of migrants' cultures, framing migrant women as victims and migrant men as hampering the progress of women. As mothers were seen as the entry point to the family, men at first did not get much (or exclusively repressive) attention in policy. It was only recently that more attention has been paid to fathers as well (van der Haar 2013).

Within the projects discussed in this dissertation, however, there is some variation in whether problems are ascribed to specific (non-white) ethnicities and cultures (the ethnicized culturalist framing) or whether this issues concerns white Dutch men as well. Overall, gender inequality is more strongly ascribed to ethnic minorities, and only some projects see a similar degree of inequality among ethnic minorities and the white Dutch majority. Some projects suggest that the men's conflicts with, and oppression of, women within families is due to their disadvantaged class position, ethnic identity, and gendered norm structures (in which men are more privileged), implying that taking away some disadvantage would also have positive effects for the women in their family.

Furthermore, professionals highlighted that what the men themselves wanted was an important aspect of what the professionals understood as emancipation and that the men had to choose to emancipate themselves, both of which influenced the way the projects were planned. According to this understanding, that was both part of the (two-sided) gender equality frame and the advancement of men frame, it is not possible to enforce emancipation. A bottom-up approach is therefore needed, in which the men were to have input as to the topics they would discuss. This way of working with target groups also resonated with the negotiating egalitarian paternalist ways of working found in Dutch social work, which attempts to encourage

participants to make certain changes while at the same time refusing to see or emphasize hierarchical positions between professionals and participants (van der Berg 2013).

The advancement of men frame of male emancipation aligned well with the participation goal, for which professionals did have the tools and experience and which was firmly embedded within the broader communitarian neoliberal discourse in the Netherlands (Schinkel & van Houdt 2010).

2.5 Conclusion: the projects' contextualized aims and expected impacts on social locations, identities, and norms

In this chapter, I have looked at the way the professionals who organized the Dutch male-emancipation projects framed their target groups, problems, and solutions. Analyzing these frames within the Dutch discursive political and policy context revealed that the projects mostly conformed to dominant Dutch discourses, with only a few exceptions.

In the framing of problems and solutions I found key elements of neoliberal communitarian discourse in the way social workers framed unemployment and inactivity as a problem, responsibilized their target groups, and encouraged them to do (unpaid) work. The way professionals responsibilized their clients also showed that professionals did not strictly articulate "feeling rules" in which they "blamed" potential participants for not participating (Tonkens & Verhoeven 2013). Professionals used egalitarian paternalist frames, in their attempt to connect to target groups. In their project plans (2010) and at the start of the projects (2011), the professionals tried to frame problems from the men's perspective. They emphasized the importance of the men's point of view, their identities, and their sense of (non-)belonging to Dutch society, thereby, in an egalitarian way, addressing the problems of their target groups themselves instead of only the way the targeted men hamper women. While these efforts are underpinned by egalitarian strategy, the professionals at the same time paternalistically claim to know in advance how disadvantaged men might best improve their lives and those of the women around them. Professionals also framed ethnic discrimination as a phenomenon of negative individual "feelings" and not as a real structural problem, a framing that resonates with dominant Dutch discourse as well.

Key elements of culturalist discourse were present in the way professionals framed "traditional values and behaviour" as problematic. The way men were supposedly affecting the social locations for women, rendering women disadvantaged, was an important reason for starting the projects: the projects aimed to do something about disadvantaged women through men. However, as professionals aimed to work in bottom-up (emancipating) ways, this meant that the men were expected to reflect on their own privilege, which can be seen as problematic, because people who benefit from privilege do not always recognize it or see it as something that needs to be changed (see also 1.1.1; Connell 2005a: 236; Connell 2005b; Kimmel 1993). Furthermore, in a framing that deviated from that of the funding organization, (male) emancipation was not only framed as striving for gender equality, it was also framed as the advancement of men themselves, as the empowerment and increased participation of "socially isolated" disadvantaged men.

As for alternative frames or counter-narratives, I have shown that, firstly, some professionals see the projects as an opportunity to work in less forceful ways than within more neoliberal and intrusive policies. These professionals highlight what men want and need for themselves. Secondly, some projects worked with specific ethnic groups, which is an exception to the currently dominant way of working in a non-categorical way. Thirdly, one project aimed to problematize ethnic stereotypes, and to empower the men despite of these stereotypes, by being aware of structural inequalities. This framing provided a counter-narrative to the dominant Dutch discourse, in which ethnic discrimination is trivialized.

If we look at the framing of professionals, we can also see how the planned interventions aimed to change gender+ (in)equality, and ask how the professionals articulated their aims to make changes to: 1) social locations, 2) identities and emotions, and 3) social norms.

The professionals' framing showed concern for men's disadvantaged social locations as well as their privilege. The professionals aimed to improve the men's individual possibilities and take away individual constraints for disadvantaged men in order to be included in paid or unpaid work. Focusing on individual change, the professionals aimed to let "socially isolated men" participate in group work. By empowering men, informing them, teaching them skills, and letting them reflect on directions for change, professionals aimed to encourage men to start doing the kind of work they liked to do (still within limitations) and in that sense gain more control over their own lives. Although this might only entail a small change in power relations, these aims can be seen as a form of social mobility and a small positive change in the men's social location.

Men who are both ethnically and socio-economically disadvantaged are additionally problematized for living segregated lives and thereby (as the professionals framed it) standing in the way of improving their own lives. The aim is to bring these segregated men with migrant backgrounds in contact with men from outside their (ethnic) community, inform them about their possibilities, and help them to be included in paid or unpaid work, all of which can be seen as ways to improve their social locations as well as increase their sense of belonging to a wider collectivity than their own ethnic community. A few projects intended to talk about ethnic discrimination and stigma in order to empower men who felt excluded and discriminated against. There were, however, hardly any plans in place to do anything more structurally about discrimination, or about disadvantaged class positions, for example by raising political awareness or encouraging political action, or at least resist individually. The focus was mostly on changes that individual participants can make themselves by feeling empowered and by "participating". This way the professionals aimed to increase a sense of belonging, but in a way that does not focus on empowering the men to make structural changes to their social locations.

At the same time, most professionals aimed to teach men from the disadvantaged target groups to behave in less subordinating ways towards women and in some cases also towards sexual minorities. This way they aimed to improve the social locations of people beyond their target groups. Especially migrant men were framed as subordinating women, a phenomenon which professionals also frame as being caused by culture (particularly ethnicized non-Dutch "traditions"). As an alternative frame, some professionals also argued that this is a wider problem that not only applies to migrant men, and/or that it is not just culture that causes the subordination of women, but also certain mechanisms of disadvantage affecting men; stressful lives, for instance, lead to hurtful behaviour. Plans to improve the situation of women by working with men, however, were not clear at the start of most projects. Professionals expected

it to be difficult to discuss gender equality issues explicitly with men, afraid they would "scare away" the men who voluntarily participated in the projects (which would threaten their funding). This way some projects created a back-stage/front-stage tension: the goals of the projects that were agreed upon among professionals were not all (immediately) communicated to potential participants. This shows that professionals expected participants to not be very open to conversations about gender equality, at least at the start of the project. Goffmann's (1978) dramaturgical perspective, which he uses to distinguish between behaviour before and after entering a public space, helps to draw this distinction between what professionals frame as problems before and after presenting it to their target groups.

Giving men a better feeling about themselves, offering them stronger, empowered identities, and bringing them a sense of belonging to a group, to the local context (the neighbourhood), and Dutch society were all goals that professionals aimed to achieve through group exercises and participation in (volunteer) work. According to the professionals, the intended changes they hoped to make to the men's sense of identity and belonging in Dutch society also constituted a way to offer men the kind of emotional capital that could increase the men's opportunities to participate in (unpaid) work. Moreover, the professionals' framing suggested the idea was that when men are more aware of what kind of man and father they are and want to be – which can be seen as gaining awareness of their social location and aspired (male) identity – they would act in less subordinating ways. If men would feel better about themselves and their relationship with (Dutch) society, the professionals argued, this would lead to less pressure in families and more room for women to improve their lives.

The aims the professionals articulated constituted changes in social norms. The professionals expected that, before the projects started, the men from their target groups did not conform to existing norms of "participation" and gender equality, which resonates strongly with the neoliberal communitarian and culturalist discourses in the Netherlands. Moreover, the men were in most cases going to be selected on the basis of their non-participation, not by their non-conformation to gender equality norms. Yet the professionals' framing also shows that the role professionals saw for themselves is more complicated than helping these men adapt to society's standards. This is understandable in the context of Dutch social work, in which social workers fundamentally see themselves as equals of their clients (this as a result of progressive developments of the 1960s and 1970s), but also have a paternalist role in which they have to ensure that citizens conform to participation and culturalist norms. Because of this combination professionals perform a kind of "egalitarian paternalism" (Van den Berg 2013).

Altogether, the projects aimed to offer disadvantaged men as well as the women around them new opportunities and take away (individual) constraints, enabling men as well as women; to give disadvantaged men a stronger sense of belonging and a more-self assured identity, but without a strong awareness of inequalities; and to conform these men to neoliberal and culturalist norms that are dominant in Dutch political discourse, but in careful ways that take into account the wishes of targeted men themselves and in which the aim to engage men in gender equality was not backed up with planned strategies to reach this goal.

In the next chapter I will present my analysis of interactions in the projects in the form of three case studies, showing how (contextualized) practices in social interventions targeting disadvantaged men impact gender+ equality (on social locations, identities, and norms).

CHAPTER 3

THREE CASE STUDIES

Between 2011 and 2013, I participated in three male-emancipation projects. By studying these three cases in their local contexts and comparing them in this chapter, I aim to show how the projects' practices were embedded in local contexts and reveal how contextualized practices impacted on social locations, identities/emotions, and norms (RQ1c). I will first discuss the three case studies separately. The first is a project for an ethnically mixed group of senior migrant men (age 55–73), the second featured a group of fathers with Moroccan backgrounds (age 30–50), and the third a group of young white men, half of whom had a traveller background (age 19–33).

Each of the three case studies presented here is structured roughly the same way. After an impressionistic introduction of each case, excerpted from my observation diary, which was based on fieldwork notes (inspired by Van Maanen 2011), I will introduce the professionals involved and the project's goals and participants. I then discuss key topics that, through an inductive analysis of my participant observations, have shown themselves to be important parts of the case. These topics offer specific insights that help to understand the male-emancipation interventions and their observed impact. These thematic sections are followed by sections in which I assess the ways in which the projects aimed to contribute to gender equality. Each case study ends with a reflection on the ways the interventions impacted on social locations, identities, and norms, and the ways in which this impact can be seen as enabling, normalizing, or otherwise.

In the last section, 3.4, I then compare the three cases, discussing the patterns in the practices of the three cases, as well as how contextual differences led to different practices and different (or similar) impacts on social locations, identities/emotions, and norms RQ1c. I also assess how this impact can be valued as normalizing, enabling, or otherwise (RQ2).

3.1 Case study 1:

Golden Guys: a project for a mixed group of senior migrant men

> The past months I have been participating in a group of eight to twelve men. Each week, we sit together in a classroom, listen to what the trainer or guest speaker has to say about (mental) health, about volunteer work, about starting your own company, or about raising children. The group discusses many topics, often in broken Dutch that is nonetheless easy enough to understand. I do not participate in these discussions, but listen, write down words in a notebook, or record it all on a small camera. Sometimes the men make me laugh: because Mr. Amir is flabbergasted after the teacher suggests trimming willow trees together (the trainer used to be a high-school biology teacher and loves his former profession) or because Rachid responds enthusiastically to everything and likes to joke around. Outside the classroom I chat with the men while having a coffee or more formally and thoroughly when interviewing them one on one in a small office. There, I learn more about their backgrounds and their troubles, how they came to the Netherlands, about their families, what jobs they have done in their lives, what made them participate in this group, and what it means to them. These are often stories about misfortunes, but also about brave choices to leave their countries and families. Most men had hardly any education and came to work in Dutch factories, construction firms, and cleaning companies. They talk about a changing Dutch society, where there are fewer jobs for people with a low education and where the media represents migrants in negative ways, which makes them worry about their children's future in Dutch society. Some men speak about losing their ability to work because of backs that no longer work the way they used to, about psychological troubles, financial issues, and sometimes about loneliness.
>
> In the project, the men discuss problems, go on excursions, and get help with forms and calls to offices. The help they get is one of the reasons for the men to come to this community centre on a weekly basis, but they also come to learn new things and, as Fouad says, to get a break from the gloomy clouds around the house at home. (Excerpt from observation diary, June 2012)

In 2010, a small non-governmental organization in Amsterdam set up a project for migrant men who were unemployed and who, according to the organizers, were "vulnerable" and "socially isolated" (P18[32]). The reason for organizing this project was that, according to the organizers, many men in Amsterdam, especially men who came here as labour migrants, "feel excluded by society". They are said to have "low self-esteem" resulting from their feelings of exclusion,

[32] In the same way as in the previous chapter, P18 is a reference to the project plan of this organization. P stands for project plan and 18 is a number that indicates which of the 23 projects it is. I will refer to project plans that were written to get an extension of funding in 2013 as Px-2. Interviews with professionals will be referred to as Ix-y, in which x stands for the number of the project and y which interview (in case there were several interviews). Observations are labeled in the same way as Ox-y, and participants with a reference to their pseudonyms.

which the project framed as not only potentially damaging for the men themselves, but also to their family members. The project thus aimed to increase individual self-esteem, but also "to improve gender relations" (P18). The organizers tried to achieve these goals by letting the men participate in weekly workshops in which they discuss their situation, their "position in society and in their families" (P18).

I visited this project 24 times between 2011 and 2013, most intensively in 2012. On my first visit, in early 2011, I interviewed the professional and a volunteer organizing the project. During that visit, one of the professionals, Karim, mentioned that they were looking for someone who could make a film about the project. As I had some experience in filming and editing, I offered to make the film, since it would also offer me the possibility to be more intensively involved in one of the projects. We agreed upon what kind of film[33] it would be and discussed this with the participants. I filmed at most of the meetings while sitting among the participants and took notes when I was not filming. I interviewed six participants, as well as the professionals and volunteers working in the project.

After introducing the professionals and volunteers involved, and the main goals of the project, I will introduce the participants and explain how they were contacted by the professionals. Afterwards, I will discuss how topics were negotiated in the project, in a mixed bottom-up, top-down way, and describe the way migration, employment histories, and discrimination were discussed. My analysis of the way gender (in)equality was discussed is followed by a concluding section in which I reflect on how the intervention impacted on 1) social locations, 2) identities and emotions, and 3) norms, and how this impact could be valued as normalizing, enabling, or otherwise.

Professionals and volunteers

The small non-profit organization organizing this project was originally set up in 2003 as a "working group" of Moroccan immigrants. After 2009, the organization reformulated its goals and aimed to increase interethnic contact between Amsterdam residents. They brought together people from different ethnic backgrounds in art projects, and organized discussions about freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and discrimination.

During my fieldwork in 2011 and 2012, one part-time paid professional and two volunteers worked on the project. In 2013, the number of volunteers involved increased and some of the previous volunteers became part-time temporary employees. In the first year, the project was run by two men: Karim and Riad. Karim, whose mother was born in the Netherlands and whose father was born in Egypt, was the main organizer. A trained social worker in his late twenties, he had experience in reintegrating unemployed people in the labour market, working for a government agency as well as for a private agency that was hired by local government. Though he explained in an interview that he felt an emotional connection with the participants, as some of them reminded him of his father, he also approached them professionally and pragmatically, for example in the way he exchanged the organizations' help for the men's promises to keep showing up for meetings.

In his forties, Riad was born and raised in Morocco, and has a university degree in geology and history from Morocco, and higher vocational education in social work from the

[33] For details about the filming process, see Van Huis & Van der Haar 2015.

Netherlands. Before the project, he had experience in working with senior Muslim men in an association for the elderly and he shows affinity with older migrant men, who, according to him, are undeservedly seen as irrelevant by policy makers. He started working in the project as a volunteer, becoming a paid professional along the way. He did have to stop working at times because of health problems. Within the project, Riad mostly offered the participants one-on-one help, for example with reading and translating official letters, filling out forms, and making phone calls to solve problems for the men. This individual support that was offered was, besides a goal in itself, a way to reach the men, establish rapport, and keep the men participating.

In 2012, Amine, a trained biology teacher (Moroccan background) joined the project as a volunteer and trainer for the group. Like in Riad's case, this developed into temporary paid employment. During the time that I did my observations, Amine led the group meetings as a trainer, mediating the discussions about discrimination and educating the men on health. Additionally, guest speakers from several institutions were invited: for example Noureddine, a man from a (mental) health agency (GGD) (Moroccan background), Yasmine, a woman from a childcare organization (Moroccan background), and Suzan, a woman from a bureau for volunteer work (white Dutch background). In 2013, Bart (white Dutch background) joined the group as a volunteer. He helped to introduce participants to volunteer work, visiting places where volunteers were needed with small groups of participants.

Project goals: increasing self-esteem and improving gender relations

In the project plan, submitted to the funding organization in 2010, the aim was to focus on "Turkish and Moroccan men" who were 55 or over. The project plan mentions that in the neighbourhood where the project was located there were 1.644 of such men and that many of them were "socially isolated" or "vulnerable". The men, according to the target-group description, are unemployed, have a low income, and have a family with children living at home. Their problems are formulated as:

> *They feel discriminated against and share the perception that society does not want them anymore. Their position in the household and family is weakened. (P18)*

The problem description continues by emphasizing the disadvantages of these men's situation for the people around them. The way these men live their lives (in Dutch: their "*leefsituatie*"), which is not further specified, is framed as: "disadvantageous to themselves (which expresses itself in depression and chronicle diseases)", but also to "the people close to them (for example their wife and children, other family members, and their acquaintances)."

> *In this situation, family members cannot fully develop themselves and psychological and/or physical violence aimed at their wife and/or children can occur. (P18)*

The project aimed to take the men out of their isolated situations, and to increase their self-esteem. The project moreover aimed to "improve gender-relations and the position of the

woman and children in the family", and to work on the participants' personal goals in order to let them participate in volunteer or paid work after the project. The project intended to make the men more "involved" in society and to make them more "self-reliant". In this plan, "social isolation" is understood as ethnic segregation, *feeling* isolated from society, and *feeling* discriminated against (P18). The men, according to the project plan, do have a family and acquaintances, the latter for example at their mosques, neighbourhood centres, and coffee houses. When asked about social isolation in this respect, Karim describes these places are "depressing", because, according to him, "men there just talk about how sad everything is" (I18). One of the goals of the project is therefore to do something about the "depressing" atmosphere they experience among these groups of men and to improve their self-worth by activating these men.

Meetings, activities, and individual consultations

The project itself consisted of a series of ten meetings in which around ten participants participated once a week. The meetings had many different topics that were decided upon in the first meeting (I will discuss these in 3.1.1). Often a speaker from another institution would be invited to discuss a specific topic.

Additionally, the group visited the Dutch Parliament and the Anne Frank museum, and went on a boat tour in the Amsterdam canals. These activities were aimed to make the men feel more included in Dutch society and create a stronger bond among the men. During the visit to the Dutch Parliament, the men were educated about the Dutch parliamentary system.

During the ten-week period and for some weeks afterwards, the participants were offered individual help with achieving their individual goals, for example helping them find (unpaid) employment or a Dutch language or computer course.

Reaching men

The men were contacted through regular consulting hours Riad held at a neighbourhood centre (I18; O18-1). During these consultations, men would ask all kinds of questions about regulations or letters they had received from authorities, and Riad would talk about the project, inviting them to join the meetings and excursions. Furthermore, after each series of workshops the organization would organize a larger festive gathering, including a dinner for men in the neighbourhood. During these festive gatherings, Karim would look back on the activities in the project with photographs and video, and he would invite new visitors to sign up for the next group. The main argument he used to persuade men was that "there already is much around for women, but now it is also time for men to become stronger". He also argued that it is fun to do activities with other men (O18-19). There was no mention of any benefits the project would have for the women in their families.

Another way of finding men was through informal contacts at a mosque Riad and Amine visited. The organization offered the men computer lessons if they would participate in the whole workshop, lessons for which the men otherwise would have to pay. Karim would also sometimes say that in order to get more help the men had to join the whole program, creating a reciprocal relationship in which the men were dependent on help, and the organization depended

on the men to keep a group together. This combination of encouragement and reciprocity resulted in groups of around ten men who participated voluntarily.

Participants: diverse migration backgrounds

Although the initial project plan states that Moroccan and Turkish men were the target, by the second year (when I participated the most) the group included men with many different migration backgrounds: Morocco, Suriname, Turkey, Pakistan, Liberia, Iraq, Somalia, and Egypt. They included former labour migrants, family-reunification migrants, post-colonial migrants, and refugees from war-zones or countries with repressive governments.

The men with Moroccan backgrounds were former labour migrants who came to the Netherlands in the 1960s or 70s (Hicham, Mustafa), men who came to the Netherlands after their family members migrated, for example their father (Zakaria), or after marrying a woman who migrated from Morocco before them (Fouad). George arrived from Suriname before the former Dutch colony became independent in 1975. Youssef migrated from Egypt in 1987 to follow a friend who told him about job opportunities in Amsterdam. Rachid (Kurdish background) and Tariq (Pakistani background) came to the Netherlands as political refugees.

Though most participants have no secondary education or did not finish, there are a few exceptions: Rachid, a Kurdish refugee from Turkey, has been educated in the Netherlands to become a social worker, but stopped his work after his brother was killed in his home country and he struggled with depression. Slowly his situation got better and during my fieldwork he worked part-time at a neighbourhood centre. And though Tariq has a university degree in English from Pakistan, he only held low-skilled jobs in the Netherlands. He explained that he was held back in learning Dutch because of a stressful five-year wait for his residence permit and for his family to come and join him.

The jobs most participants had had were low skilled, for example in construction, as factory workers, as a warehouse worker, in a sewing workshop, or in restaurant kitchens. At the time of the project, almost all the participants were unemployed. Some of the participants had physical health problems, for example with their back (e.g. Zakaria, Hicham, Fouad). Some men had mental health problems (Fouad, Rachid). Youssef, who migrated from Egypt in 1987, worked in a sewing workshop for years. He became unemployed after the Dutch fashion industry moved workshops abroad to save on labour costs. After months of unsuccessfully applying for jobs, he slowly stopped looking.

Although many had been unemployed for years, they said they would want to work if they could. Some felt a moral pressure to work, which led some to perceive their own situation negatively. In the group and in the interviews, they said that unemployment comes with boredom, loneliness, and financial problems. (I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter 5).

The family situation of participants was diverse: some of the men were married and had children living at home (e.g. Hicham, Zakaria); others were married with their children already having left the house (e.g. Mustapha); Youssef was divorced and had an estranged teenage daughter; Jamal was divorced and homeless at the time of the project; Rachid was single and had no children.

Altogether, the men had quite diverse backgrounds, and many experienced difficulty coping with their unemployment situation, with physical or mental disabilities, and with the negative images of migrants in Dutch society. In the next section I will show how the

professionals and volunteers involved the participants in setting up the content of the program in a combination of bottom-up and top-down strategies.

3.1.1 Setting up the content in a mixed bottom-up/top-down approach

While setting up the agenda for each ten-week program, the trainer employed a mix of bottom-up and top-down approaches during the first group meeting. First, some rules would be agreed on, asking the men what would be required to have meetings that work best for everyone. This democratic style led to an agreement to let each other finish speaking, to not answer phone calls during meetings, and to arrive on time. In the same meeting, the trainer, Amine, asked what topics the group would like to discuss. He and Riad, who was also present and sat among the participants, would also make some suggestions themselves, and transform the men's suggestions into topics that would also fit the project plan and the organization. The next quote comes from a transcription of video footage I took in the first meeting of a group in 2012.

Trainer Amine: Themes [he writes the word on a large whiteboard and turns back to the group], what can we, every Tuesday at 11, what can we do together? There are many themes we can think of, many topics [brief silence as the men look at Amine]. (….) What, for example? Do you have topics that we can discuss with each other? [a few seconds of silence]

Rachid: I have an idea, about, if someone has problems, problems in the family, in the home, those kinds of things. We can talk about that. How people live, (…) people's rights. So people know…

Amine interrupts: What kinds of rights people have in the Netherlands. [He writes 'rights and duties' on the whiteboard.]

Fouad: Rights and duties, and also what we need, for social problems, what happens in our homes [he draws an imaginary circle on the table].

Rachid: Like about children, raising children.

Fouad: What a father should do to raise a child with respect, for example to talk about culture.

Amine: [writes parenting on the white board and points at it smiling] Parenting, that is what I heard you say, and rights and duties. (O18-10)

The quote shows that Fouad and Rachid would like to discuss personal topics concerning "social problems" and "what happens in our homes". In interviews, it became clear that Fouad experienced some personal problems with his wife. Rachid, who is single, was interested from another angle. He saw gender equality as an important Dutch value, which he did not see

accepted in migrant communities and therefore important to discuss (IRachid). In the quote, however, it shows that Amine directed the conversation towards "parenting" and "rights": less personal or polemical topics. Throughout the meeting, he seemed to want to keep the discussions light.

After this interaction, Amine continued asking for more topics and offered some suggestions. He suggested going on an excursion to The Hague, which he connected to Fouad's idea about talking about rights and duties. Riad, the other trainer/volunteer suggested inviting someone to talk about volunteer work. Amine suggested going on a field trip to trim willow trees (in a traditional Dutch way) as a form of volunteer work. Amir responded surprised: "Why? Why would you?". Amine answered defensively: "To enjoy being outside and doing something." Amir kept protesting: "For me, if it's work, it's good, but…" Amine asked if he would participate if it was paid, to which Amir said yes, but the other men agreed that trimming willows was not a good way to spend one of the meetings. Fouad, in a polite negotiating style, added that he liked the idea of going on a trip to The Hague to visit the Dutch Parliament, but not trimming willows.

The interaction and selection of topics show a mix of approaches by which the men were given the opportunity to speak out, which can be seen as an enabling approach. At some moments the professionals guide the men in certain directions, for example where it concerned volunteer work, which gave the intervention a more top-down character. The democratic, bottom-up strategy offered participants a sense of agency: the participants were heard and not just told what to do, and they had some control over the program. Working democratically also allowed the professionals to adjust to the interests and problems of participating men, and to leave out topics in which men were clearly not interested (like trimming willow trees). The top-down side of the approach gave the professionals the possibility to adjust the project to what they saw as the problems (as described in the project plan) and the appropriate goals, regardless of what the men themselves said their problems were. In an attempt to keep the meeting light and positive, eventually, gender equality was not explicitly part of the program – despite the fact that two participants were interested in such a topic – while parenting and volunteer work were.

3.1.2 TALKING ABOUT WORK, MIGRATION HISTORY, AND DISCRIMINATION

Talking about migration and work histories

In one of the meetings, the organizers let the men reflect on their migration to the Netherlands. To start a conversation about their past, they screened a film about Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands. The film, directed by Karim Traïda (with a background from Algeria), starts with old black and white images of men recruited to work in the Netherlands in the 1960s. The men are physically examined (some barechested) and interviewed by a white man in a suit sitting behind a desk. He asks brief stern questions in French about the applicants' language skills, education, and family situation, followed by a (life-changing) *accepté* or *pas-accepté* (accepted or not). The film then turns to the present and an interview with a man, who is about the same age as the men in the project, about his early experiences in the Netherlands. He talks about poor living conditions in pensions for labour migrants, about working overtime, which he could not refuse, and about the difficult choice of staying in the Netherlands or returning to his country of origin. As more restrictive immigration laws in the Netherlands made it difficult for him to come

back to the Netherlands if he would go to Morocco, a residence permit became valuable, and he decided to stay and bring his wife and children over.[34]

The men watched the film attentively. Trainer Riad regularly stopped the film and provided a summary in Dutch for the men who could not read the Dutch subtitles or understand the languages that were spoken (Arabic and Berber). Afterwards, the participants were asked to talk about their own first experiences in the Netherlands, about what they expected when they came here, about the work they had done, and about the differences between the Netherlands and their countries of origin.

Omar (Moroccan background) was the first to respond, saying that the situation with labour migrants that was shown in the film was one of exploitation. Rachid (Kurdish background from Turkey) protested and said that the conditions in the countries where "we" came from were worse.

Rachid: Why is our past so dramatized? As if it was that bad, poor, exploited, but where I come from, when I lived there, there was no work, and you got nothing from the government (….) the boss didn't care if you had a roof over your head. (….)

Omar: Can I respond? (….) It is both exploitation (….) I don't want to see everything negative, and (…) maybe it is an improvement here for that man, but it is still exploitation. It is still unjust: what happened in Turkey, what happens in the poor countries, but also what happened here. (….) We should not say it is alright, because it also happens in, or is worse in Turkey, or Morocco. You should always stand up for your rights. (O18-10)

Trainer Riad interfered in this discussion, saying that the conversation was getting "too negative". Although the film raised awareness of the men's disadvantaged position in the 1960s and 1970s, Riad did not want to focus on exploitive labour relations. His aim was to turn the conversation towards positive aspects of migration to the Netherlands and about the men's possibilities to contribute to Dutch society: "I do not want only negative things. The intention is to also discuss our successes. That is very important, so we can move on", he stated in the group meeting (O18-10).

Riad asked the men about the positive sides of their migration. Tariq, responded that he was happy when he could at last get his family to the Netherlands. When asked about more positive aspects, he says he highly appreciates the educational system and thinks people are kind to each other in the Netherlands. Mustapha added that he likes it that there is democracy in the Netherlands and that he would have liked to return to Morocco if the political situation improved and there was less inequality between the rich and poor. George explained that his situation was different from what he saw in the film, because, coming from Suriname in the early 1970s, he was already part of the Netherlands. Still, he experienced difficulties adjusting, for example because of discrimination:

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[34] Dakira, *40 jaar Marokkaanse migratie naar Nederland*, directed by Karim Traida (2009).

> *The differences between the Dutch and non-Dutch were big: What were we doing here? Can't you stay in your own country? That was the discrimination side, but if you are here, you have to try your best to deal with it. You have to work, and the Dutch language… We [Dutch-Surinamese] spoke a bit differently than they spoke here. Here they speak with a [thinks for a moment and moves his fingers in front of his mouth] with a tongue sound. We speak normal Dutch. [Looks at me, smiling. I hear myself laugh on the recording] Right? So you have to listen well if someone talks to you, what is he saying? (…) But I've tried my best. I've worked here at [the steel factory] for years, as a crane operator, heavy, big machines. I have worked for many years and I'm waiting for retirement now [George is 61 years old]. (O18-10)*

The quote shows George's experiences with inequality and in- and exclusion after his arrival in what George described earlier as the European part of his homeland. George first made a connection with the other men by opposing the Dutch and non-Dutch, including himself as non-Dutch whereas he previously mentioned identifying as Dutch before he came to the (European) Netherlands, and thus showing a fluid understanding of national or ethnic identity. George suggested he felt alienated upon arrival by rejection, but also by differences in pronunciation.

Experiences of inclusion, on the other hand, occurred because of his own agency: trying his best, working for many years, and having a respected job that is rewarded with a pension. Talking about the big machines added to the respect he was trying to gain among this group of men, showing (off) a strong working-class masculinity. George's narrative also shows that he saw dealing with discrimination as an individual responsibility, and the solution for hardships is to work hard. Work is here presented as a (male) virtue, and George can proudly present himself as someone who conformed to that gender norm. In an evaluative last meeting, George said that the project contributed to him feeling more included in society, specifically in an increasingly diverse society. George explained that he had previously felt alienated in Dutch society not only by discrimination, but also by cultures that were unfamiliar to him. The project helped him to feel more familiarized in city streets, because he now talked with people from different backgrounds with whom he had only had superficial contact in everyday encounters before (O18-19).

As shown in the above examples, some of the men responded directly to the encouragement to talk positively about their past. Riad continued to ask about their migration and work experiences, encouraging the men to especially talk about successful experiences. Salem, not a very talkative man, was next in line.

> *Riad: Can you tell us about your migration experience? (…)*
>
> *Salem looks tired and sits hunched in his chair: The same as the immigrants here.*
>
> *Riad: When did you come to the Netherlands?*
>
> *Salem: The 1980s, end of the 1980s.*

> *Riad: What did you do at that time?*
>
> *Salem: The same as everyone, I think. I worked.*
>
> *Riad: What kind of work?*
>
> *Salem: All types of work [naming nothing in particular]*
>
> *Riad: Which type of work was important to you out of what you did during all those years?*
>
> *Salem: I didn't do important work, just work.*
>
> *Riad: Production employee?*
>
> *Salem: Just that.*
>
> *Riad: But everyone who does something is important, I think. Whether you are a managing director or a cleaner, it is all important.*
>
> *Salem: I just worked, normal work.*
>
> *Riad: Because without* that *person [raising his hand] you cannot work, and without that person [lowering his hand] you also cannot work, so it is all important. [Now turning to the whole group.] Try to see for yourself: what are my successes? In what have I been successful? If I compare it with my own country for example. If I stayed there, what would be the situation? (O18-12)*

Riad was clearly looking for positive stories about migration and work in order to make the men feel better about themselves. In the quote above, Salem did not go along, repeating four times that the work he did was "normal", "not important", or "just work", maybe having done work of which he could speak with pride. Riad did not succeed in letting Salem talk, which made it necessary to explicitly end on a positive note himself. At the end of the meeting, Riad explicitly told the group how he thought the men should ideally position themselves as migrants in Dutch society, distinguishing between people who do it right and wrong:

> *There are two kinds of people: people who want to return, but don't, they become stressed and unhappy. And then you have people who accept it and make something out of it. They do not integrate because they have to, but because they want that themselves. (O18-12)*

The quote shows that Riad urged the men to be aware that since it was their own decision to stay in the Netherlands, they should want to "integrate" in Dutch society. If they would not, according to his argument, they would become unhappy and stressed. Moreover, his narrative

implied, it would be their own responsibility or fault if they did not choose to integrate or were unhappy.

Emphasizing the ability of men to choose might have been intended to empower the men and enable them to take action, but it could also make men who made less straightforward choices – who stayed despite longing to return – feel worse about their situation, because in the end their unhappy situation was their own choice. In that sense, Riad's intervention could have a demoralizing and excluding impact, contrary to his intention.

Talking about discrimination

In one meeting, the group visited the Anne Frank Museum in Amsterdam. The organization received additional funding for the visit from a foundation aiming to create more understanding for what the Jewish community experienced during the Nazi occupation. The visit fitted the general goal of the organization of creating an understanding between people in Amsterdam with different backgrounds. After visiting the museum, while drinking tea, the men started talking about ethnic discrimination. The discussion turned to the discrimination of Muslims in the Netherlands. Some of the men expressed concern about a law that had been passed in France banning headscarves in public places, and about attempts in Dutch Parliament to do the same. In response, trainer Amine suggested to continue the discussion the following week when we would gather again in a classroom at the community building.

In that session, Amine initiated the discussion about discrimination by asking the participants what, to them, the term discrimination meant. He asked the participants to make associations:

Amir [agitated]: No job, there used to be work and no discrimination. People used to be good. Now it's just work, only about earning money. Only money to the banks. And, yes, many people say, those foreign people should leave. [He swipes the table with both hands to show how unwanted 'foreigners' are]. Here, many children of foreigners are a problem. Many have a big mouth, drink. It used to be different. That is discrimination.

Amine writes on the board while Amir is talking, "No job", "Foreigners out": Ok, so, foreigners have to leave.

Amir: It used to be different, you know. [We used to] just work, had enough to eat, people from different countries, good people, but not anymore. (…) Having unemployment benefits without work, understand? I would like to get money without working. That's (…) why people say: Foreigners must go. He [the Dutchman] says: Foreigners don't want to work. He just wants to steal. That's what most people say, but it's not that way. All people work, there are also busy people, you know? (O18-10)

The quote shows how Amir (Moroccan background) gave his perspective on what he sees as problems related to discrimination: he experienced a change over the years that he understood as

caused by a more economically driven society ("only about earning money"), leading to unemployment and poverty. He also described an increasingly ethnically polarized society in which children of immigrants have a "big mouth" and in which "Dutch" (white) people want "foreigners" to leave. He emphasized that the image these Dutch people have of immigrants is wrong, because many immigrants do work. According to Amir, there was no discrimination in the past when migrant men were just working (which contradicts what other participants were saying about their experiences, for example George above).

After Amir finished talking, trainer Amine continued involving more men in the conversation. When asked what discrimination meant to him, Tariq first hesitated and said he just wanted to listen to the discussion, but he was ultimately persuaded to give his interpretation of the term:

Tariq: Discrimination is… [moving his hands in front of him, his right hand lower than his left]: Class, you know: high, middle, low …discrimination.

One of the other participants: Inequality (O18-10)

In the conversation that followed, Amir asked why there is inequality, and Tariq presented it as a universal fact of life that is hard to change. He now also included religion, ethnicity, and race, highlighting the discrimination of "foreigners", especially non-Europeans, in the Netherlands.

Amir: Why is it like that, why is it like that?

Tariq: Discrimination is everywhere. Between rich and poor, religions, religious politics, rich people who…

Amine [writes "religion" on the white board, not "rich and poor"]: Religion…

Tariq: For our country, for our culture [talking about Pakistan] it is rich and poor [inaudible] politics.

Amine: You say politics, what do you mean by that?

Tariq: Between foreigners and Dutch people for example, that is also discrimination. Not getting big opportunities (….)

Amine [repeats and writes on the board]: Not getting opportunities.

Tariq: You can never become prime minister as a foreigner here.

Amine: No? Is that so?

Tariq: Yes. That's what I think.

Amine: I think the Belgians have an Italian prime minister right now.

Tariq: Yes, but he is European (….), we are from East Asia, from South America, from the Middle East.

Amine: Okay, (…) so, he has to be European and not a non-western allochtoon.

Tariq: It is white and black [inaudible].

Amine: So, it can be about different levels. It can be based on religion. Based on Europe and outside of Europe, so based on country… (O18-10)

Like Amir, Tariq highlighted economic inequality before going into discrimination based on ethnicity or race (both use the term "foreigners" for those who are discriminated against). Class issues were clearly important to some of the participants, as could also be seen when the group discussed their migration and work histories, using the word exploitation.

When Tariq suggested that people with migration histories from outside of Europe do not get "big opportunities", Amine brought up the example of the then prime minister (2011-2014) of Belgium, Elio Di Rupo, whose father was an Italian guest worker. By referring to Di Rupo, Amine might have wanted to highlight that such positions are possible for people with a migrant background, which would counter the idea that they are being discriminated against as people with a migrant background (perhaps meant as an enabling narrative) and highlight that people like them do get opportunities. Tariq, however, persisted that there is inequality ("not getting opportunities") for people with a background from outside of Europe, and for black people especially.

Notably, no one brought up gender (nor disability or LGBT) discrimination in this discussion. A discussion about headscarves, which is a highly politicized issue (Saharso 2007; Shadid & Koningsberg 2005; Roggeband & Lettinga 2014; Meer, Dwyer & Modood 2010), did touch on gender discrimination, but it was framed as religious discrimination and as interference (of state and employers) in private matters instead. Jamal added to the discussion that he heard women are being refused jobs because they wear a headscarf. He argued that people should accept the religious obligations of Muslims and that there should be a mutual acceptance of duties and laws.

Jamal: It is compulsory for us in the Koran. How can we let people accept it in the Netherlands? We have to accept the duties of the Netherlands, you know…

Amine (trainer): The laws…

Jamal: Yes, the laws. That we do, but my private life, they also have to accept that. So, if I'm unfaithful, if my wife is unfaithful, or with the headscarf: That's between me and my wife and god. You cannot…

> *Amine: You cannot come between that.*
>
> *Jamal: So, whether I keep my tradition or faith. That's my…*
>
> *Amine: So, politics have to let people live their private lives.*
>
> *Jamal: Yes, they can, with theft, or selling heroin, or criminality, they can fight that. That's bad for people, but not a headscarf! What does the headscarf have anything to do with… (O18-10)*

To Jamal, wearing a headscarf was first of all compulsory according to the rules of Islam and, secondly, a collective decision between him and his wife (and God). So Jamal experienced the interference of others ("people in the Netherlands", referring to the non-Muslim majority) in deciding whether a woman wears a headscarf or not as an intrusive, constraining, and excluding practice. Trainer Amine showed he agreed with Jamal:

> *If someone wants to walk around naked, without clothes, that's fine, but if I want to walk around with a burqa, that has to be fine too. (O18-10)*

In his rhetoric, Amine placed himself in the position of a woman, comparing the right to wear a veil with the right to be naked. Amine also offered a positive rhetoric about the Netherlands, presenting it as essentially a free country in which you can make these kinds of choices yourself.[35] He was also critical of a possible prohibition of face veiling that was under Parliamentary discussion in the Netherlands around the time of the project.

George, who is not a Muslim, added that he understands why people want to introduce the law against the face veil, claiming that people do not like it when you cannot recognize someone in the street and cannot look them in the eye when you talk to them. Amir, who is a Muslim, was critical about the face veil as well, saying that it is not part of Moroccan tradition. According to him, Moroccan women never used to wear a veil. He adds that merely wearing a veil does not determine whether you are a good Muslim or not. Winston (Liberian background) added that if a woman has a good heart she will do no wrong, and that she could also commit adultery if she wears a veil, assuming that that was the reason for women to be veiled.

Although women were in this way included as a topic of discussion, the discussion did not turn to the discrimination of women, or the way in which men are (theoretically) in a privileged or oppressing position. The men were addressed as disadvantaged themselves and not

[35] Being naked in public is actually restricted in the Netherlands. However, it depends on the context what is allowed and what not. Sunbathing topless on the beach, for example, is allowed. In fact, images of topless women on the beach were used in a (controversial) film about the Netherlands made by the ministry that was responsible for immigration and integration policies and meant to educate new immigrants about Dutch values before coming to the Netherlands. There is also a censored version which removes any nudity and explicit sexuality (two men kissing) to accommodate countries in which such depictions are forbidden by law (de Leeuw & van Wichelen 2012: 206).

as potentially advantaged, which is surprising in a project with a goal of "improving gender relations" and a concern for "psychological and physical violence on wife and children".

Amine concluded the discussion by saying that, although there are laws against discrimination, discrimination still exists in society and it is difficult to fight it and to be sure whether you are being discriminated against (O18-10). A week later, resuming the discussion about discrimination, Riad again advised the men to doubt whether they are being discriminated against.

> *If we are bothered by a situation, then we shouldn't immediately say discrimination, but [taps his head with his index finger] think about it, is it really discrimination? Or isn't it? Is it me, or is it the others, or is it society? (M, O18-12).*

What the examples and especially the last two quotes show is that, although discrimination is talked about and acknowledged, the project in practice offers little in the way of improvement and no strategy at all for the men to deal with the problem. The solution offered by the project is to take away frustration by talking about the problem, to remain calm when you feel discriminated against, and to try not to see conflicts as discrimination too quickly.

Moreover, the men's narratives about discrimination and the trainers' reactions were all based on what the men understood to be discrimination, but featured very few of the men's personal experiences with discrimination, which were also not asked about directly.

At a meeting I attended with an earlier group in the same project in 2011, the men shared more personal experiences with discrimination. In these interactions, too, the same advice was offered to "question whether it really is discrimination" and to "remain calm" (O18-4).

After one of the meetings about discrimination (O18-10), when I asked about the given advice, Karim explained that he thinks it is not always certain whether the men are really being discriminated against. Because they do not speak Dutch well, there could be misunderstandings that lead the men to think they are being discriminated against. He contextualized this explanation by saying that his personal way of dealing with discrimination is to not be held back by it and that he has noticed that you can achieve things if you put in enough effort.

The two meetings about migration histories and discrimination were aimed to empower men in the sense that they would feel better about their situation and think more positively about the past as well as about their future in Dutch society. Yet the practices could also be seen as constraining. They could have been more enabling if men could give each other more guidance in what they could do when they face discrimination. It turns out that talking about discrimination does not so much empower the men to do something about discrimination or give them strategies to cope with discrimination in assertive and enabling ways as it gives them an opportunity to express and let go of frustration, and to be taught not to react directly or aggressively if they think they are being discriminated against. This makes sense in the Dutch context in which there is a denial or "ignorance" regarding racism. Only overt cases of racism are recognized, and even in those cases, at least when it concerns verbal expressions, they are defended under the guise of freedom of speech (see also Chapter 2). The professionals in these examples not so much deny racism (though they do doubt whether what the men see as racism

really always is), but they certainly do not encourage the men to assertively stand up for their rights.

3.1.3 "SLIPPING IN" GENDER WHILE TALKING ABOUT PARENTING AND HEALTHCARE

Gender equality was not chosen as an explicit topic to be discussed in the ten meetings, nor was gender discrimination explicitly part of the discussion about discrimination. Attention for gender equality turned out to be carefully and subtly slipped in, seemingly unplanned and coincidental, for example in talks about parenting and mental health.

Educating men on parenting (and gender)

In each sequence of ten meetings there was one meeting about parenting in which Yasmine, a female professional with a Moroccan background and with experience in teaching women about parenting, educated the participating men. Additionally, there were two short talks by two trainers (men with Afro-Caribbean backgrounds and with experience in organizing fatherhood projects for mainly Afro-Caribbean men). These two trainers invited the men to join them on a weekend to talk about fatherhood, which became a sidetrack of the project in 2013.

Yasmine combined personal and professional narratives in her encounter with the group of men. She educated the men about "parenting styles" and let the men compare these styles to their experiences with their own children or their own childhood. In one of the meetings, Yasmine wrote three styles of raising children on the white board: authoritarian, democratic, and *laissez faire*. She advocated the "democratic" style, in which talking to, negotiating with, and explaining things to children is key. Parents committed to this style explain to their kids why some things are allowed and others are not. Physical punishment, or expressing a great deal of anger, is not part of this style. Instead, children should be disciplined by temporary taking something away, for example a video game, and an explanation always needs to be part of the punishment. The two other styles discussed are presented as opposites. Yasmine said the authoritarian style was the way she herself was raised. Without saying that the participants themselves practice this authoritarian style, she suggests the participants resemble her father. Yasmine emphasizes the problems she encountered being raised this way:

> *This authoritarian style, that was how I was raised. That was my father, right? he used to be very strict: "Quick! Do this!" In school, it was a bit of this and a bit of that [she points at the whiteboard, where it says authoritarian and laissez-faire]. There is authoritarian: You have to! And what happens if the teacher leaves the class and you think, "Freedom!"? You jump on the table: "Party!" The teacher returns, and immediately it's quiet. The teacher (…) gives freedom, and I didn't learn that at home. I didn't know how to handle it. I didn't get that independence. (O18-14)*

This shows how Yasmine, using an example from her own experience, taught the men certain views on parenting. She showed the men that when you raise children in an authoritarian way,

children will misbehave when placed in situations without authority. The lesson is that children need to get used to some freedom, and that it is more important to let children understand why some behaviour is better than other behaviour than it is to restrict unwanted behaviour. The men nodded and agreed during the talk, but they did not respond with personal stories.

In a discussion about puberty, the conversation shifted towards gender, and arguments between children and parents about the way children dress. When Yasmine gave an example of boys whose underwear is showing because their trousers sag (a fashionable style derived from hip hop culture), Riad (volunteer and trainer now sitting among the group of men) says that the men are more concerned about their daughters and the way they dress. Trainer Amine, who also sits among the men as a participant, wants to give an example and starts talking about his wife. He tells the group that at one point, he found out that when she was still in school his wife (they were already married) left the house wearing a hijab but took it off on her way to school. When he saw her in the street without the hijab, he asked her about it at home. She said that she wore her hijab for him and for her parents, but she did not always feel like wearing it. Amine explained to her that he did not want her to put on the hijab for him, but for herself and for God. After that conversation she stopped wearing the hijab altogether, but at a later moment she started wearing it again, this time, according to Amine, choosing for it herself.

With this narrative, Amine showed the men that as a man you should not tell women what to wear, because then they would not wear it out of religious conviction but out of fear or obligation. This way, women are represented as people who should make their own choices. This view is slightly different from how Jamal talked about veiling in the discussion about discrimination. According to Jamal, it was simply mandatory for women according to Islamic rules, plus he saw it as something "between me and my wife and God", showing that he had a say in it as well (O18-10). Arguably, Amine also made it clear that wearing the hijab is the right thing to do.

The example shows how a gender issue (in this case, who decides what to wear, and specifically whether to wear a religious symbol) is talked about in a way that does not seem planned ahead, but coincidental. The project goal of "improving gender-relations" (P18) turns out to be slipped in indirectly through an educational meeting about parenting.

Trying to let men reflect on the way fathers raise children and to introduce them to less strict and more negotiating "styles" can also be seen as a way of addressing gender equality. The lessons presented the men with more ways to raise children, and ways to be a less authoritarian father and therefore a different kind of man. On a more critical note it can also be seen as a normalizing intervention, resonating with dominant culturalist discourse. The parenting course interfered with the culture of citizens with migrant backgrounds, shaping what a "good" citizen should do, think, and feel, also in their private lives. Yet it was done by giving the men different options and only implicitly condemning the authoritarian or laissez-faire styles.

Talking about parenting with men can in itself be seen as a way to involve men in gender equality and potentially enable women, if in the process men start to contribute more to parenting, thereby freeing women from some of their tasks. Talking to men about parenting could also contribute to mutual understanding between men and women about parenting, for example if men and women receive the same advice about parenting and they then negotiate a way to handle and divide parenting tasks. Most attention was however given to the ways in which men could discipline children – which is in line with hegemonic masculinity – not talking about, for example, the division of care and work between spouses.

Being educated by a woman with a Moroccan background – a young educated woman – could have liberating consequences for the way the men perceive the possibilities of women with a migration background (daughters or granddaughters). Yasmine could be a positive role model in that sense. According to professionals Karim and Riad, the participants perceived Yasmine as someone who could be their daughter. Karim said that some men from an earlier group asked Yasmine how she experienced growing up as a daughter of a Moroccan immigrant worker in the Netherlands. The men saw the encounter with Yasmine as an opportunity to learn about their children's experiences, which they found more difficult to talk about with their own children.

Educating men on mental health (and gender)

A second meeting where gender was slipped in was about mental health. An external trainer from a public mental health organization, Noureddine (Moroccan background), visited the group of men to educate them about mental health and ways to deal with stress. Noureddine used images, props, and metaphors to illustrate his lessons, for example showing the group two cards with men on them (with light brown skin): one looking fit and slim and standing up straight, the other crooked with a big pile of pictograms on his back that represent problems. One of the pictograms showed two people arguing, another showed someone crying. According to Noureddine, the fit-looking man is healthy, and the man with the pile of problems on his back unhealthy. He used the Dutch expression for "a healthy mind in a healthy body" and the similar expression in Arabic. Noureddine advised the group to talk about their problems in order to prevent negative thoughts from building up in their head and becoming unhealthy. On a whiteboard, he drew a downward spiral and made a comparison with short-circuiting electronics breaking down, pointing to the lights in the room. He again advised the men to talk to their wives and friends, or, if the feelings of stress get worse, to seek help from a social worker or a general practitioner. At that point, one of the participants, Rachid (Kurdish background, higher education) asked: "What about our women? The women also become stressed because of the men."

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*Noureddine picks up this suggestion and turns to the whiteboard, writing down "M" for man, and underneath the "M", a "V" for woman [*vrouw *in Dutch]. He draws bold arrows from M to V, symbolically stressing their unequal power relation, explaining: "With the older generation it's like this."*

Underneath this image, he writes an M and V next to each other, and draws two lighter arrows going from M to V and from V to M, saying: "And here [in the Netherlands], but also more and more with the younger generations, it's like this. They [men and women] talk to each other, support each other. With the one above [the unequal example], the woman can get very stressed, but also the man, because he doesn't get her support." (O18-16)

Noureddine argued that (more) gender equality will help to reduce stress, both when men talk about their problems with women, and when they allow women to live healthier, less stressful, lives by not telling what to do and giving them more freedom to make their own choices.

Therefore, Nouredinne here addresses the men's "privilege", as well as costs of masculinity, as problems (Messner 2000). Rachid, who asked about the topic, is satisfied with this model. He responds with: "That's what I mean." And, "Many of our women are stressed", emphasizing the importance of the topic to him.

In this interaction and also at other moments, Noureddine shows a certain sensitivity to gender issues. Coming from a mental health organization, his main concern is to let the men open up more about their feelings and problems, and to ensure they seek out professional help when necessary, but he is also concerned about the oppressive behaviour of men against women.

During a visit to the mental health organization where Noureddine works (GGD), he introduced the group of men to a female psychologist with a Moroccan background. One of the participants, Mustapha, complimented her ("You did a good job."), showing pride and admiration for someone with the same background making it to such a position. The meeting with this woman seemed to be an empowering experience, showing the men that someone with the same ethnic (and class) background can make it that far within a single generation. The encounters with her and with Yasmine offered the men female role models which could widen their ideas about what (migrant) women with similar backgrounds are capable of.

In the above example, the men themselves did not talk about their personal problems with mental health, nor about their own experiences with (in)equality between men and women. According to Bart, a volunteer who started in a later year, more intimate topics were discussed on a weekend organized for a group of participants. Parenting was the central theme of the weekend, but the men also discussed ways in which they could solve disagreements with their partners without resorting to aggression. The professionals for this weekend worked together with an organization that uses theatre techniques to help the men discuss examples from their own experience. While actors would play out certain issues that were brought up by participants, the participants acted as directors in order to try out several solutions to problems. The meetings addressed even more intimate topics when the men started talking about what happened with old age, and female and male sexuality. Bart (volunteer) explained that the trainer (Noureddine) could subtly change the topic from problems with their prostate to sexuality and old age. He also emphasized how open the men were about their personal experiences in the conversations (IBart).

The above shows that, although gender equality is not part of the program that is communicated with the participants, gender (and later also sexuality) is brought in as a topic of discussion via other topics. In this project, these were parenting and health education. In my observations, however, these talks hardly led participants to explicit personal reflections on (in)equality in their personal relationships. Bart's account of what happened on the weekend away with a group of men showed that reflecting on these topics was possible through subtle guidance from professionals towards these topics.

From my interviews with participants of this project, I have learned that they believed that they learned new things and felt better because of the project. They enjoyed the contact with the other men and were glad to be able to express themselves (IZacharia; IHicham; IMustapha; IRachid; IFouad; IYoussef). The project took them out of the negative moods which some of the men experienced (IFouad; IMustapha; IYoussef; IJamal), and the intervention also gave them hope to undertake more activities to improve their lives. With the individual help they received, some of the men started attending computer or language courses, and some men started doing

volunteer work (IRachid; IMustapha; IZakaria; IFouad). I will discuss the impact the participants experienced in more detail in Chapter 5).

3.1.4 Case Study 1 conclusion: observed impact on gender + equality

The articulated aim of the project was to take "vulnerable" men out of their socially isolated situations and increase their self-esteem, as well as to improve gender relations and the position of women and children in their family. These articulated aims are geared to improve men's as well as women's social locations.

The observations show that professionals and volunteers offered participants individual help and encouraged them to take further steps in improving their lives, for example by taking up Dutch-language or computer courses, or by participating in volunteer work. In the thematic meetings, the men were educated on parenting skills and on health issues specific to senior men. The men were educated to be able to handle stress better, which led to conversations about how to solve issues with children and partners in a more peaceful manner. All these initiatives were aimed at increasing the men's possibilities to make (limited) improvements, which sometimes also included improving the lives of their children and partners. The men were offered possibilities to find healthier and more peaceful masculinities, as well as alternative ways to have fulfilling lives than just as breadwinners. They were encouraged to do volunteer work and be involved fathers, which can be seen as alternatives to a breadwinner ideal. The way relationships with female partners and with daughters were discussed, however, was limited and timid compared to the attention to the men's own wellbeing, which leads me to expect that the impact on social locations of women was limited.

There were also practices in the intervention that were emotionally empowering but at the same time constraining. These constraining elements concerned the way professionals handled the men's narratives about their lives as migrants and workers, and their feelings of anger and frustration about their position in society, including the way they were viewed by the rest of society (their social location and ascribed identities). In group meetings, some of the men said that they felt (dis)connected to Dutch society and that they experienced discrimination. The professionals and volunteers wanted the men to express these experiences and feelings in order to leave them behind and positively focus on their future so they could be encouraged to participate in volunteer work. When discrimination was discussed, the main advice the men were given was to doubt whether one is discriminated against, to remain calm, and to avoid conflict. The professionals did not give them tools that could help the men deal with situations in which they were discriminated against, nor were they encouraged to get involved in collective action against discrimination or other kinds of injustice. Migration backgrounds and (intersecting) class backgrounds were identities and social locations that were addressed to let the men express their frustration in order to let them integrate and participate in society. Gender identities or perceived gender hierarchies were not explicitly discussed.

The practice of convincing men to do volunteer work is a form of "responsibilization" matching social norms that resonate with neoliberal communitarian discourses (see Chapter 2). To feel positive about Dutch society and their own role therein was also presented as a norm. The project thus not only impacted on norms concerning behaviour, but also on "feeling rules"

(Hochschild 2003). The meetings about parenting promoted a specific kind of fatherhood, as the men were encouraged to become less strict and more communicative family members. The topics discussed in the meetings in that sense fit culturalist discourses in which the role of social workers is to integrate migrants culturally as well as encourage their participation. The social workers themselves, however, did not frame learning parenting skills as integrating into Dutch society, but as learning skills that were known to have good results in parenting.

As an alternative frame to hegemonic masculinity, volunteer work was encouraged by arguing that it would make the men feel better about themselves. Participants were encouraged to do volunteer work that suited them, that they wanted to do themselves, and that made them feel better. When it became clear that not all men could be successfully guided to paid or unpaid work because of health problems or lack of suitable volunteer work, the professional (Karim) expressed doubts whether "participation" in (unpaid) work should always be the goal and suggested that it should be enough for these men to participate in social activities. He said these things in a meeting with other professionals, also proposing they discuss whether their "participation" goals were set too high for these "vulnerable" men (O 6-12-12). In that sense, the project formulated a counternarrative to the neoliberal communitarian discourses in which citizens are portrayed as irresponsible when they do not "participate". It shows that sometimes an egalitarian way of working that also is concerned about what the men themselves want is preferred over the more constraining responsibilizing way of working. The combined bottom-up and top-down way of choosing topics to discuss is also exemplary of the egalitarian paternalism seen in other Dutch social work (van den Berg 2013). In this combined approach, the trainers suggested and chose the topics of volunteer work and parenting, while participants chose to talk about discrimination.

Several local contexts were relevant in the way this intervention played out and impacted on the lives of men. In the anonymous urban environment, some of the men had little contact with other people and experienced isolation or alienation. This setting also meant that most participants did not know each other before the project started. Some of the participants said that they experienced the project as familiarizing them with their ethnically diverse urban context. This shows how social interventions can integrate and familiarize citizens from diverse migration backgrounds, which is a contrast to the dominant concept of integration as migrants assimilating to the non-migrant majority.

The organization that set up the project was small, which enabled an accessible atmosphere with dedicated professionals and volunteers. The size of the organization and its low budget also made the professionals dependent on connections with other organizations that offered free trainings within the 10-week course such as those on parenting, volunteer work, and mental health. A training about gender equality was not available, nor did the professionals have the budget or expertise to develop a gender training themselves.

The backgrounds of the professionals worked in bridging ways. The professionals themselves had migrant backgrounds and shared most participants' religious (Muslim) background. At the same time, they did have a higher education, and one of the professionals, Karim, was raised by his Dutch mother. For Karim, his personal way of dealing with discrimination and his own experiences with getting ahead through effort were behind his aim to encourage the men to think positively and not focus on discrimination. Though he was speaking from personal experience, his discourse strongly resonates with the dominant Dutch discourse about discrimination.

In the local context of this project, multiple intersecting disadvantages were important. Besides being working class, low educated, and having diverse migration backgrounds, these were also senior men who often were in poor health. Though these social locations and individual conditions made it hard to involve the men in (volunteer) work, some of the men did find volunteer work.

This project showed more emphasis on "participation" than on gender equality, and attention for gender equality was limited. Considering the goals in its project plan, this is remarkable and it shows that there are mechanisms at work that made the gender equality goal fade. One of these mechanisms was the men's disadvantaged social locations and related problems that led to "distraction" from and a fading of the gender equality goal. In a program that is meant to empower disadvantaged men, a bottom-up (combined with top-down) approach helped to stimulate a sense of agency, but it also presented limits in what would and what would not be talked about. The bottom-up approach mostly initiated talks about the men's disadvantaged positions, rather than about behaviour with which they might be subordinating others. Arguably, the social workers were more at ease with working with the men's own disadvantages and with what men wanted to change themselves. In other words, participants and professionals preferred to talk about the participants' disadvantaged position on several dimensions of inequality (class, ethnicity, health) than about gender issues. For professionals this was part of an attempt to connect with the men. The participants' "privileged" gender positioning had a "blinding" effect (Kimmel 1993; Messner 2000: 4), because this dimension of their social location "hurts" them less than it does women. Although this project combined a bottom-up with a top down approach, the top-down approaches focussed more on involving men in volunteer work, while gender equality was a less important topic. "Participation" could be more easily aligned with the men's bottom-up motivations ("empowering" men through participation), while this was more difficult with gender equality goals.

My observations also show that the wish to create a positive atmosphere pushed away gender equality goals. A positive atmosphere was needed for the professionals to empower men and to keep them attending. However, this "harmony" norm also led to an avoidance of, and a "tiptoeing around", difficult topics like gender equality, especially when those topics were considered private and sensitive. The observations indicated that even when two of the participants wanted to discuss "problems at our homes", the trainer felt the need to keep the interaction light, ignored the topic, and changed it to "parenting" (3.1.1). It remains to be seen whether the professionals rightly assessed what can be talked about openly and what would push men away, or whether there are more possibilities to formulate these goals more openly.

Furthermore, the project lacked experience, methods, and specialized professionals to discuss gender issues with men, especially compared to the ways it was able to address participation and parenting (see also Chapter 2). In social work, much attention has gone to parenting programs, especially for women (Van den Berg 2013; Roggeband & Verloo 2007), and to participation programs, which has paved the way for experienced professionals as well as strategies and methods in these fields. The professionals in this project had methods and experts specialized in volunteer work and parenting available to them, while methods and experts to discuss gender equality with men were not available. Though very briefly and lightly, the professionals did manage to discuss gender equality, for example slipping gender in as a topic

while discussing parenting. Involving men more in parenting can also be seen as a way to implicitly address gender equality.

Altogether, the project had clearly enabling as well as normalizing aspects: the practices improved the participants' possibilities, but they were also aimed at conforming men to dominant norms of participation and to more peaceful or pacified (but still disciplining) ways of parenting, resonating with culturalist and neoliberal communitarian norms. The project also had an emotionally empowering and familiarizing impact, although little was done to empower men to resist discrimination and/or racism. Despite some reflections on equality in relationships and on less strict ways of being a father, the impact on gender equality in this project can be expected to be limited.

3.2 CASE STUDY 2:

POST- MIGRANT FATHERS: CHANGING PARENTING AND CONFRONTING A BAD REPUTATION

> When I visit the project for the first time, I enter a room with about 20 men (estimated age between 30 and 50) sitting behind tables arranged in a big square. Two young men (interns with Moroccan backgrounds) educate the group on recent changes in regulations on unemployment law, benefits, insurance, and child support (the bottom line being that all are declining). At the end of the talk, the young men ask if there are further questions and offer to come back to give them information about other topics, for example about the Dutch school system. When one of the men asks me if I have questions and another asks me to introduce myself, I explain that I am a researcher and that I visit projects to write about them and what the participants think about this project. One participant explains that it is good to come together as fathers and get to know each other. When I ask why, he explains: "It's good to form a bond with each other. We know each other from the neighbourhood or from the mosque, but like this we talk to each other more and we can plan to do things with our children", defensively adding: "Not that I never do things with my children." When I ask the group what they think about meeting separately as men, without women, one of the interns explains that it is out of respect for the men's culture and religion: "If you want men to participate, you need to respect them". Another man adds that perhaps in the future they will meet like this together with women, but not now. I sense that the men feel somewhat scrutinized by my questions and are defensive. After the first meeting, I visit the group two more times, in 2011 and 2012, and in 2013 I visit the project for five meetings in a row. In this last group, the men joked around a lot with each other and with the professionals, which made the visits very enjoyable. However, a feeling of distance still remained. Perhaps because of the limited visits compared to the other two cases, or because some of the conversations (especially the jokes) were in Moroccan (Berber or Arabic), but maybe also because of my expectation that contact between men and women would be more problematic in this group, which one of the professionals characterized as religiously conservative. (Excerpt from observation diary, July 2013)

The project in this case study is situated in a town (around 60.000 inhabitants) that can be considered a suburb of a larger city. It is well known for its large villas and rich residents, but also has middle-class residential areas and neighbourhoods with post-war modernist high-rise buildings that are homes to more disadvantaged residents, among them many migrant families with Moroccan backgrounds. These neighbourhoods are where the project central to this second case study was set up. Moroccan labour immigrants started coming to this town since the 1960s, working in local factories, at nearby slaughterhouses, or for building contractors. In the

beginning, they lived in pensions, some of which have been criticised for their bad living conditions. In the following decades, family reunification made the migrant population rise strongly. Because the town's relatively high percentage of Moroccan immigrants and because of their indicated overrepresentation among high-school drop outs, the unemployed, and people involved in criminality, the town was one of 22 municipalities in the Netherlands labelled a so-called "Moroccans municipality" (Dutch Parliament, 17 November 2009:16), and received extra government funding to develop and improve methods to do something about drop outs, street nuisance, and criminality by "Moroccan-Dutch youth" (de Boom et al. 2011). Yet this specific ethnicized funding from the Dutch government stopped after 2012, when such specific policies were abandoned (Dutch Parliament 26-10-2011: 2).[36] The municipality then developed policies such as an "intervention-team" that performed house calls (a so-called "behind-the-front-door" policy),[37] "street coaches", "family coaches", and regular dialogues between (ethnic) communities within problematic neighbourhoods (ibid.). Housing corporations, the police, the public prosecutor, the municipality, social services, and the largest welfare organization all aimed to work closely together to make these policies work.

In 2011, a large welfare organization set up the male-emancipation project central to this case study. The organization has several day-care centres and preschools, organizes education on parenting, Dutch-language courses for parents, welfare work, youth work, eldercare, and more. In my first interview with the professionals who set up the project, they explained that at their parenting courses and in (pre)schools they had found that there was mostly contact between professionals and mothers, not with fathers. The mothers, according to the professionals, said that men needed to be more involved in the raising and schooling of their children. Some of these fathers who the professionals consulted while preparing the project indicated that they wanted to know more about the Dutch school system in order to understand their children's progress and possibilities, and be able to guide them in a better way. The men also indicated that they wanted to do something about the youth loitering on the streets of their neighbourhood. These calls from women as well as men motivated the involved professionals to start the project (I8).

I visited the project eight times and interviewed the professionals[38] and five participants involved. I also spoke with the professionals more informally on a regular basis before and after me observational visits. Unlike in the other two case studies, this study relies heavily on interviews with one of the professionals (Nadir), both because of my limited number of observations (eight visits) and because of the rich material these interviews provided.

Professionals and volunteers

The main organizer of the project, Nadir, has a Moroccan background that differs from those of the project participants in class, education, regional background, and religious life. Nadir (in his forties) was born in a large city in Morocco, in a family where all his brothers and sisters were able and allowed to go to school and university (except for one older brother), which he

[36] "De aanpak en de daarop gebaseerde maatregelen moeten voor iedereen gaan gelden, afkomst speelt daarbij geen rol." (Dutch Parliament 26-10-2011: 2)

[37] After complaints about this "behind-the-front-door" policy being performed in a too intrusive way, and after a judicial sentence from the court of justice, the policy temporary stopped, but continued in 2010 in adapted form.

[38] I also had access to an interview with one of the professionals conducted by Marleen van der Haar.

mentions to indicate the differences between the participants' and his family's attitudes about gender equality. According to him, the participants are mostly from small villages in the north of Morocco. They have a low education, and the women in their families had even less education than the men in the past generations. Besides education and urban-rural differences, Nadir indicated that though he was raised as a Muslim, he did not share the men's conservative religious convictions (I8-2).

Despite these differences in background – or because of his higher class positioning – Nadir has a respected position in the local community and a close relationship with the men, in the sense that the men kept attending the group and started to speak in an increasingly open way about their lives and attitudes. According to one of the other professionals, Farid, this was because Nadir has been involved in the neighbourhood for many years and because he "gets things done" for them. Nadir has for example helped to organize sports activities and to solve neighbourhood conflicts between white Dutch residents and residents with a Moroccan background (O8-3; I8-3; I8-4). Professionally, Nadir has training in social work, but also in filmmaking, and experience with combinations of the two. He has worked as a youth worker, and in a previous project organized discussions in which he interviewed and filmed residents who were in conflict with each other as a way to show different groups the other's point of view. Through film images, he let people reflect on their own perspectives and opinions and those of others. In this project, he sometimes also used this technique, and though I have seen him filming and seen some of the film material, I was not there when film material was shown to participants.

Besides Nadir, there was a main trainer who would lead the discussion in the group. In 2011 and 2012, this was Najim (Moroccan background), with a background in pedagogy. Together with a non-governmental knowledge institute, he developed a method for involving fathers in parenting. The trainer of the group in the third year, Farid (Moroccan background), also had a university education in pedagogy and gender studies. Together with Nadir he changed the project in 2013 to give it a stronger focus on "emancipation" goals, including discussions about gender, relationships, and men's position in society – which shows a combined "gender equality" and "advancement of men" approach to male emancipation (as explained in 2.2.3). Like Nadir, Farid sees himself as less religious than the participants. He does not discuss this with participants, but assumes they know. He says he feels engaged with matters of inequality, both where it concerns ethnic inequality and inequality between men and women (IFarid).

Another professional, Samir, has a closer relationship to the participants. His background also resembles those of the participants more. In his appearance, Samir is quite a distinctive person, with a long beard and usually wearing a djellaba and a skullcap. The other professionals and participants generally dress less distinctively. Samir lives in the neighbourhood, is a practicing Muslim, and comes from the same area in Morocco as most of the participants, even from the same village as some of them (I8-2). Samir has a vocational training as a social worker and started to be involved in the project as a volunteer, which then during the project turned into temporary employment (just like the volunteer trainers in Case 1). Nadir says he relies heavily on Samir for their contact with participants. An important role of Samir, which he is able to do because he knows most of the participants well, is to make sure the men keep attending and not only express themselves in socially desirable ways. He often participated in the group as one of the participants, confronting the men with what he thought were differences between

what the men said they did and the way they actually acted in everyday life. These confrontations often happened in a non-hostile way: "You have to speak from the heart" (O8-7). Sometimes the participants admitted that in real life things are more difficult and complex than the way they presented it in the group (I8-2).

In this project there were no female trainers involved. Only early on in the project there were two women (white Dutch background), professionals from the welfare organization, involved in writing the first project plan.

Project goals

The aim of the project was to "create awareness among fathers about their role as a father and man in the parenting of children", to create a network of fathers, and to guide fathers to education or (volunteer) work through "actively guiding the men towards participation in society" (P8). In the plan, the role of fathers in raising children is framed as "essential" to providing "positive support for the child". As mothers are already being reached by other policies and projects, according to the project plan, the fathers need to "grow along with" them. The educational programs about raising children are planned to be alternated with topics that the men choose themselves, showing a wish to work in a combination of top-down and bottom-up ways, similar to the project in the first case study. The aims formulated in the project plan are broad: "big social issues", "media", "empowerment", and "male emancipation" (P8). What is meant by these is not specified in the project plan.

In my first interview (with Nadir and the two female white Dutch professionals), I learn that the professionals organizing the project understand the emancipation goal first of all as a gender equality goal, but also as improving the lives of men who have a disadvantaged position in Dutch society. The gender equality goal includes improving men's as well as women's lives. Nadir, however, mostly frames it as a way to improve men's lives but without reinforcing male privilege. To him emancipation means "becoming more aware of your rights", and where it comes to parenting it means "becoming more aware of your role and making more choices in that role, rather than applying what you learned from the way you were raised by your own mother and father" (I8). The goals, according to Nadir include: "being involved in your family and doing some tasks in the family, not only when it comes to parenting but also in everyday life". He names daily chores like making coffee or doing groceries, which in his work as a youth worker he experienced young men having trouble with. The goals moreover include the fact that fathers need to teach children to respect women and not see them as lust objects. From conversations with women in the neighbourhood he has learned that young men are harassing women in the street. One way to address gender equality, according to Nadir, could be by addressing male status and "image":

When do you have status? Do you have status when you don't do anything in the household and don't do anything with your children, or do you have status when you are highly involved and visit school at parent-teacher meetings. That also creates an image. Which image do you want for yourself? And what would you like for your family? I think that is a struggle for

> *men: do I need to adapt to how others want to see me? (…) Or is it more about how do I find happiness myself? The men are not sure about these things. (I8Nadir)*

Nadir, in other words, planned to transform ideas about male status, and to let men make more active choices in the way they want to live their lives, which he in the next quote frames as a basic "right":

> *Look, to me emancipation and participation means coming up for your rights, because as a man you also have certain rights, and that right is to also be yourself, without others looking at you as though you were a lesser person. Because that is what men sometimes think: If I do this, then I am seen as less of a man. But what does it mean to been manly? What is it? (I8Nadir)*

The quote above shows that Nadir aims to offer the men more freedom from constraining masculinity norms, to be involved in their family in the way they want to and that would be best for their family. The expectation is that these are choices that men would make and that these would be beneficial to women as well.

When Nadir is asked how he plans to discuss these masculinity issues, he changed the topic to other types of inequalities, which shows a disconnection between the framed problems and solutions. He talks about what men would be interested in discussing first, which, according to him, is their own disadvantaged position. Nadir explains that the men feel they are "not being listened to" in the sense that they are not taken into account and respected (I8). According to him, you need to get past their "complaints" about these issues before you can discuss their families and parenting. To Nadir, discussing the issues the men themselves are dealing with is not only a way to reach men, but also an important part of the way he understands emancipation.

The project plan includes the aim to encourage men to participate in an odd-jobs service for people in the neighbourhood, arguing that by participating the men can become more confident – thereby implying that there is a problem with their confidence. In a text on the organization's website from 2013, the organization communicates that participation in volunteer work can have a positive impact on children, as they need an active father as a role model.

In a new project plan, written in order to receive additional funding for 2013–2014, male emancipation was formulated as the main goal,[39] with the related activities specified as:

[39] The organization wrote an updated project plan in order to receive additional funding to be able to organize a third year for the project. The funding organization offered this possibility for projects that were able to recruit a sufficient number of new participants, and that would have a plan to discuss gender equality and relationships with partners in the project. The new plan's ambition was to recruit more men, and it had an accentuated attention for "male emancipation". The funding organization asked for a more accentuated attention for gender equality after they noticed that gender equality did not get as much attention as could be expected from the main program goals in the projects' actual practice.

> *Breaking through traditional gender roles, giving feedback on learned behaviour, and making it possible for partners in families to have a conversation about relationships. Participants are stimulated to reflect on their own role as a man (individual), but also on their role in a group. (P8-2)*

The quote shows that "traditional gender roles" need to be broken and "learned behaviour" needs to be reflected upon, revealing a similar "traditional values-emancipation" nexus identified in the analysis of project plans in Chapter 2. The phrasing implies that there is something wrong with current gender roles and behaviour, without making explicit what.

On a website addressing potential participants, the organization writes that the project is meant to increase the "happiness and success of your children, your happiness, and that of your family". The way to reach these goals is by "taking up household and care tasks". In this way, the project more openly frames itself as aimed at greater gender equality. However, it still does not explicitly mention gender equality, nor does it mention the benefit of such a project for wives or partners. Therefore, as in the first case study, it still tiptoes around the topic of gender equality.

The project plan does not further explain what is meant by the need for reflection on "their role in a group" (as opposed to their role as "individuals"), whether it refers to the group of participants, their role as part of a (stigmatized) ethnic group in the Netherlands, or otherwise. My observations below clarify what this goal entails in practice.

Reaching men

The participants were reached through already established contacts in the neighbourhood centre and by other participants bringing in new men. Samir has an important role in keeping in touch with (potential) participants, reaching men, and making sure they keep attending. According to Nadir, Samir sees the men at the mosque and around the town's streets every day, which can be seen as characteristic of a smaller town as opposed to the larger city in the first case study. Samir also calls the men before each meeting to remind them and convince them to come. According to Nadir, Samir knows exactly what to do to keep the men attending. This includes creating a welcoming atmosphere by bringing tea, lemonade, and cookies to the meetings (I8-2).

In 2011, the plan was to have a mixed group with men from different ethnic backgrounds. According to Nadir, however, the group of fathers with a Moroccan background that was reached first, preferred to keep the group exclusively for men with a Moroccan background. They expected a language barrier and a cultural barrier if white Dutch men were included. This preference was respected because the professionals wanted to keep the men attending, which shows that the participants had some power over the course of the intervention.

In 2011 and 2012, the number of participants of the group meetings varied between 10 and 30. In 2013, the participants formed a more consistent but smaller group (7-10). According to Nadir this made it easier to have more personal conversations with the men.

Courses, volunteer work, and a sounding board for local institutions

The project's practices consisted of educational and discussion meetings about parenting, their migration history, and individual problems and goals. The participants were moreover involved in different types of volunteer work, organizing activities for children and youth and participating in street patrols. In 2013, the participants played football together before each meeting. Furthermore, after the first two years (in 2013), the group was regularly consulted by institutions like schools, municipality, and police in order to organize activities or discuss/solve problems.

Participants: 1st, 2nd, and 1.5 generation

All participants had a Moroccan background. Almost all were born in the north of Morocco, except for Nordin, who was born in the Netherlands (age 22). Some migrated to the Netherlands for work, but most of the men I interviewed came to join family who already lived here. The age of the men I interviewed varied between 22 to 48, and they arrived in the Netherlands at different points in their lives. Many participants (according to Nadir, and as is also reflected in four of the interviews) can be identified as being part of a so-called "1.5 generation" of immigrants (Rumbaut 2012), referring to people who immigrate to a new country before or during their teenage years. Although there is variation between them as to when and under which circumstances they came to the Netherlands, this 1.5 generation also has some experiences in common. These men were not the pioneers like their fathers, and unlike the second generation they were not born in the Netherlands. Some had to miss their fathers for part of their lives and were for the greater part raised by their mother and/or grandparents. Youssef, for example, was eight when he joined his father in the Netherlands together with his mother, brothers, and sisters. He says that at such an early age he himself did not think much about the change. He especially remembers that it was difficult for his mother to come to the Netherlands, because living apart from her husband in Morocco she had a lot of help from his grandparents, with whom they lived. Youssef says that as a child he did not care much about where he lived. Only later did he realize that the Netherlands was now his home country. Azim's father lived in France when he was young. His mother raised him, and he described her as being his mother and father at the same time: to him this meant that she was the one who disciplined him. When Azim was around 12 years old, his father retired and returned to Morocco. Eight years later, Azim moved to the Netherlands to marry a woman with a Moroccan background who grew up in the Netherlands.

Of the six men I interviewed from this project, three had temporary irregular cleaning jobs at the time of the interview, two were unemployed, and one was in school. Two respondents used to work as a delivery driver but had lost their jobs. According to Nadir, most of the other men in the group were unemployed, and he thinks some of them sometimes worked in informal jobs (though he did not ask them about it, presumably to avoid a conflict of interests, as he worked closely with the municipality and police, and needed to build a relationship of trust with the men) (I8-2).

Younes worked as an assistant at a primary school where he had started as an Arabic teacher 17 years earlier. He suffered from depression, however, and at the time of the interview he was about to lose his job because the school was closing down due to declining numbers of pupils. The youngest participant, Nordin, was learning to be a social worker.

Except for Nordin, all respondents were fathers with children living at home. Azim was recently divorced. At the time of the interview, he was homeless and temporarily staying with a friend. He had arrangements to see his young daughter, who stayed with his ex-wife. He did not tell the group about his divorce for fear of gossip, which shows that not everything was openly discussed where relationships were concerned.

The interviewed participants indicated that they wanted to learn and talk about raising children, and to change something about the behaviour of the youth from their community in order to improve the neighbourhood and change the bad reputation of Moroccan immigrants. Younes moreover explained that he wanted to be a good example for people in- and outside of his community.

3.2.1 CHANGING A BAD REPUTATION: IMPROVING A TURBULENT NEIGHBOURHOOD AND TAKING AWAY STIGMA

Disciplining young men and violence in families in parenting courses

According to Nadir, one of the reasons for the men to participate in the group was because they were afraid that their own children or those of family members and neighbours would become involved in the groups loitering on the streets, some of whom are involved in criminality. The interviews with participants confirm this image (IYoussef; IAhmed; Iyounes). The fathers wanted to learn skills with which they could keep their own children and those in the neighbourhood on the right track. Some men said they also wanted to contribute by teaching other men about what they already knew about raising kids (IYounes; IAzim) and by participating in street patrols (O8-2).

In 2012, Najim gave the group of fathers a course about raising children. I attended one of these meetings, in which the men discussed how to talk with adolescents. Najim, with the help of a PowerPoint presentation, first explained that how you address a child depends on their age. He emphasized that it is important to start building a good bond with your children from a young age if you want to be able to correct them when they reach puberty: "Every coin you invest here [he points at age group 0-12 on his PowerPoint] you will get back here [pointing at age group 12-18]"(O8-3).

Talking with children and understanding what they are going through is key while raising children, according to Najim. Children need to be encouraged to share their thoughts so they can solve problems better.

The men participated actively in the training and offered each other advice. One of the participants, Wahid, told the other men to have breakfast with their children in order to have regular times when they spend time with them. Abdel added that they should go for a walk with their children: "So you can get to know them." Samir asked if it would be a good idea to go shopping or do groceries with children to combine useful things. (Another participant suggested a toy store.) Abdel disagreed: "A walk in the park is free and you can talk..." Pretending to give his child a compliment during their walk, he adds: "You've done well in school!"

The examples show how the men gave each other advice, and that talking with and positive encouraging children is seen as important and as an improvement to stricter ways of raising children or not being involved at all.

When Najim discussed correcting children, the men compared the advice they get with how parents used to raise children.

Participant A: You shouldn't say: You are doing worse than so and so, that's what used to happen, right?

Najim: Yes, you tend to see the negative things about your child, but you should see the positive things as well.

Participant B: What if you have tried your best before the age of 12, but it still goes in the wrong direction?

Participant C: Continue!

Najim: You never have full control. There are many influences: television, friends...

Participant A: Internet (....)

Najim: Raising children is difficult. Specialists say: Don't punish children with food, or by not allowing them inside the house.

Participant D: That's what used to happen, in the 80s.

Najim: Have patience and think before you act. They [referring to specialists] say: Do not discipline children when you are emotional, often you will regret it. (08-3)

The interaction shows how the men were encouraged and how they encouraged each other to be less strict and violent with their children. The men made references to the past, demarcating which behaviour is wrong or outdated. These references, however, do not necessarily indicate that children are no longer raised this way, but rather (politely) point to what are socially accepted moral standards. The men in my observations did not explicitly refer to their own experiences with raising children and showed some reluctance to discuss private topics, but were able to discuss difficulties, practical solutions, and norms in more general or hypothetical terms.

The above shows that the trainer and participants tried to instil confidence by emphasizing the difficulty and unpredictability of raising children, and to encourage the men to continue to be actively involved, also if their adolescents were going in "the wrong direction".

The intervention offered the men possibilities to be less distant and less strict fathers than their own fathers were or than they themselves were before (in an interview, Younes described himself as having been such a distant and strict father in the past). In that sense, the intervention liberated them from restricted ways of being a man and enabled them to choose different parenting options. Besides enabling or even liberating men, the intervention was also aimed at emancipating children: it produced a dominant norm in which children have a voice and are seen as needing to express themselves and to be heard. Children were not to be raised to

become equals to their parents – they needed some restrictions as well – but children's positions were transformed to be more equal to adults.

The intervention can furthermore be seen as a normalizing or disciplining (or even "civilizing", Elias 1978/1994) intervention in the sense that it controlled behaviour within a complex (not strictly coordinated) system of surveillance (Foucault 1975/1991). Besides giving advice on how to raise children, the men disciplined each other in a Foucauldian sense: by asking about each other's behaviour they influenced this behaviour, by which their behaviour is pushed to become more normalized according to the dominant discourse (Foucault 1975/1991), which can be seen as a form of collective self-government.

The intervention constrained men by having them teach each other ways to discipline children that are thought to be better but also more efficient for the child. It is therefore aimed at disciplining children (young men) by disciplining their fathers, especially by controlling anger. Whether aggressive behaviour or violence was a problem among fathers was not asked by professionals, and the men did not talk about the use of violence within their own family. The fact that the men found it necessary to give each other advice to act in peaceful ways shows that there is a certain expectation that violence is a problem, though it was very implicit.

In the next section, I will discuss the way professionals encouraged men to make improvements in their own lives (including in the way they parented children and addressed the youth in the neighbourhood), while at the same time highlighting that they should not feel responsible for all the negative things said about "Moroccans" in the Dutch media.

Your own square meter: Responsibility, stigma and emancipation

Although the men felt a responsibility to encourage the youth in their neighbourhood to stay on the right track and not cause trouble, and although the professionals supported the men in wanting to do this, there were also limits to what the professionals wanted the men to feel responsible for. This becomes especially clear in an encounter with a local journalist who asked the men about criminality among Moroccan immigrants.

At an evaluative and festive meeting at the end of one of the courses in the summer of 2013, the group was joined by a local journalist (a white young woman). Two participants, Youssef and Mohammed, answered her questions in the presence of professionals Nadir and Farid, all sitting outside at a picnic table. Another participant who sat close to them also took part in the conversation. As the conversation took place outside and I sat close by, talking with one of the other participants, I overheard the conversation. The journalist asked why their group only included men.

Youssef defensively says they are also planning to have a meeting with women. Mohammed responds that he thinks this is not a good idea, because he would expect too much conflict between men and women. Without asking further questions about this issue, the journalist asks about criminality among "Moroccan youth", stating that they seem to be overrepresented and asking how the men feel about that. Because Youssef and Mohammed do not answer straight away, one of the other participants sitting nearby says that the young men find it difficult to deal with the differences in culture. The journalist says that she would expect

> *immigrants to try harder in the Netherlands because they "get opportunities" here. The same man answers that that is easier said than done. At this point, trainer Farid reacts. Clearly a little agitated, he responds that there is a bias in the measurements that show an overrepresentation, because often differences in social-economic background are not taken into account, and because the police target immigrant youth more, distorting the numbers. He says that there still might be an overrepresentation, but not as big as is often stated. The journalist now tries to appease them, saying she recognizes this problem and that a small group "spoils it for the rest". Farid responds even more agitatedly to that last remark:*
>
> *"No, that is not true. Why would they spoil it for the rest? Why do I have to be responsible for kids I do not know. Autochtonous Dutch people have to be responsible for it too, just as much. That is why I [in the group] talk about looking at your own square meter: You can feel responsible for your family, for your bond with society, for the way you interact with your neighbours, acquaintances, colleagues, but you can't feel responsible for all Moroccans in the Netherlands who you don't know. You need to feel just as responsible for them as other Dutch people would."(O8-8)*

Farid's reaction shows that he aimed to limit the stigma "Moroccans" feel over being held responsible for the actions of other people with a Moroccan background.

The "square meter" Farid talked about came up in one of the meetings in which the topic of emancipation was discussed. In this meeting, Farid presented the men with research statistics which showed that the grades of "Moroccan boys" are generally lower. He also showed that these numbers are improving and that Moroccan girls are doing well in school. He highlighted that change is possible with effort, but that their influence is limited as well. After showing these figures, he asked the men to reflect on them and write down what they could do to improve their own situation and the situation of their family members, though he also told them to limit their ambitions (see an example of the resulting interactions in the next section, 3.2.2):

> *You cannot change the whole world, but what can you do on your own square meter? (...) which activities can you do to improve – not the whole [town] – but the world around you. (O8-7)*

In his training, Farid tried to let the men feel responsible for their own lives, their family, and the neighbourhood community, at the same time limiting what they should feel responsible for. In this sense, he attempted to limit the blame which comes with the existing stigmatization of citizens with a Moroccan background: he responsibilizes (in a communitarian or even neoliberal sense) and at the same time de-responsibilizes.

Responsibility, as I have indicated in Chapter 2, is a term that is strongly incorporated in current neoliberal communitarian citizenship discourses. However, the attribution of responsibility is also part of the way social stigma works. People are stigmatized through the

unjustified generalizations of the deviant behaviour of a part of a group to the whole group, which causes a "spoiled identity" (Goffman 1963/2009). Stigmatized groups are thus unrightfully held responsible (blamed) for the behaviour of a few, even though they had or have no power over it. A strong responsibility frame can thus contribute to social stigma. Farid's solution, as a professional who aims to empower men, is to add nuances to this responsibility: feeling responsible can contribute to men's agency and emancipation, but there is a limit. The way of the journalist phrased (or framed) the problem of responsibility is what urged Farid to correct her: it is not the criminal ones who "spoil things" for the rest, it is the people who hold everyone from a stigmatized group responsible who "spoil things" for the disadvantaged group.

After Farid's encounter with the journalist, I talked to Nadir. He explained that he and Farid experienced that journalists have been repeating the same questions about the criminality of Moroccan immigrants for decades, and the men they work with keep hearing these same questions while they are actively improving their situation and those of the people around them. "This provokes a strong reaction from us", he adds. The journalist's question triggered Farid to protect the men in the group as well as himself from further stigmatization.

The observations presented in this section show that the local problems with youth in the neighbourhood were what motivated the men to be involved in a project, to reflect on their position/social location, as well as to act to improve the situation in their local community. Besides being involved in street patrols and raising children "better", their activities included: organizing football tournaments and other recreational activities, and being involved in conversations with local politicians and professionals. After the project had been running for two years, institutions like the municipality, schools, and the police regularly asked the fathers for advice, inviting them to mediate and be included in public meetings (P8-2; I8-2).

The men felt a responsibility to improve the (local) situation themselves and were encouraged by the professionals to do so. The professionals encouraged the men in an enabling, empowering way, with an eye for nuances where encouraging "participation" becomes blaming, or increasing social stigma. The question of the journalist, in contrast, was stigmatizing, holding people involved in criminality or other misbehaviour responsible for the stigmatization of a whole group.

3.2.2 Gender equality: talking about wives and daughters & collective religious machismo

The professionals in this project emphasized gender equality in both their interviews and project plans. The participants, on the other hand, highlighted that it was learning about parenting, improving their neighbourhood, and creating a more positive image of Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands that was important to them in this project. In the next section, I will show some ways in which professionals tried to address gender (in)equality, despite the little intrinsic interest most men had for the topic.

From "slipping in gender" to talking about emancipation

In 2012 (the project's second year), I attended a meeting about parenting during which relationships with women were discussed in a way that was subtle and seemingly unplanned, similarly to the strategy used in the first case study: introducing gender equality via other topics.

The next quote is an example of this "slipping in" of gender and, more specifically, relationships between partners. The meeting was about how to talk with adolescents and what to do when you are angry. The trainer, Najim, turned the conversation to arguments he had with his wife and what he does when he feels angry.

Najim: Sometimes I have a disagreement with my wife. What I do is I walk away for a while, and continue talking later on, and then it is completely different [takes on a different posture: stands up straighter, lowers his shoulders, breathes in calmly, looks relaxed, but also more serious].

Participant: But then it is more difficult to punish them, if you don't feel angry any more.

Najim: That is a good thing. You can calmly explain how you feel about it. (O8-3)

The quote above shows how the trainer mentioned a way to handle a conflict with his partner while discussing parenting. In a conflict, the better way to behave as a man that was suggested and acted out in the quote was to be calm instead of aggressive.

Shifting from children to partner (wife), like in the example above, can be seen as problematic, because it seems to equate wives with children. The mention of "punishment" by one participant seems especially problematic in that respect. However, since the group had been talking about disciplining children earlier, he might very well still have been referring to children. It is moreover remarkable that the participant felt that when it comes to disciplining it was important to react out of a pure kind of emotion, whereas Najim's advice is to control your emotions (anger) and act more rationally. As I have also shown in the previous section, Najim here tries to prevent men from acting aggressively, whether it is towards children or towards partners. This way, he suggests a pacified kind of masculinity as an ideal to strive for within the project (van Huis & van der Haar 2013; van Huis & van der Haar 2015). In Elias's terms, Najim, here encourages the men to show self-restraint (1978/1994).

The same shift of topic, from children to wives, occurred when talking about giving children compliments. Najim had advised the men to compliment their children as a way to encourage good behaviour, instead of punishing them for failing. When he asked about the results the week after, the men also talked about how they tried to give their wives more compliments. Moreover, he advised them to discuss any issues pertaining to the children together with their wife and to back each other up as parents in case one parent sets restrictions to children. This way, Najim advocated an equal negotiating relationship between partners, as opposed to one in which one parent (the man) decides or in which there is no negotiation and each parent decides on their own, which shows Najim's normative preference for negotiating households (de Swaan 1979; 1981).

In 2013, the training was more openly about relationships between men and women, although still most of the time was spent on the way men wanted to improve their own lives. Participants during this year were told that the course would be about their role in society, in the neighbourhood, and in the family, including their relationship with their partner. In an interview,

Farid said that he explicitly uses the term "emancipation" with participants. In practice, however, trainers mostly communicated emancipation through the advancement of men frame (see 2.2.3), as a way to encourage men to think about way in which they could improve their lives (I8-4). In the group session, Farid explained to the men that they should think about their "influence" in society, their influence over their own lives and their social contacts, including their family. Farid explained that the men are encouraged to look critically at their own behaviour and attitudes. The way the men wanted to improve their lives, however, was left up to them. "I don't want to force values on to them", he said in an interview. He did want to let participants reflect on values they had, asking: "where they come from and do these values help me to improve my life?". In his communication with the participants Farid made comparisons with women's emancipation and how women had "gained influence". He also mentioned the emancipation of enslaved people as an example of liberation. He told the men that they were now in a position in which they should think consciously about the way they wanted to improve their lives (I8-4).

At a meeting, Farid asked the men what they could do, what kind of influence they had. He reminded the men that they did not have to change the whole world, but that they can start from their own "square meter". To initiate an active discussion, Farid first divided the group into pairs and gave each pair a large sheet of paper to write on. The men made a list of what they would like to change. After fifteen minutes the pairs presented what they had come up with. Participants Samir and Younes started, presenting their list:

Contact with neighbours; a good bond with children; a bond of trust with partner; giving a good example; to laugh with people; to give a present to my wife; a clean environment; respect the elderly; communicate openly. (O8-7)

When Samir pointed out that the bond with his partner is important, Ahmed, who sat amidst the group, asked: "What if the wife doesn't want to?" Samir didn't respond at first, and after he has finished presenting Ahmed asked the same question again. Samir gave him a questioning look, as the sexual connotation attached to his words made some of the men chuckle. Ahmed explained what he meant and a discussion followed:

Ahmed continues, impersonating a woman without a change in his voice: I am not going to listen to you!

Nadir: You mean, you want something, and she wants something else?

Ahmed: Yes

Farid: If you disagree, what are your options?

Mohammed [joking]: Back to Morocco!

Faiz [more serious]: Talk to each other.

Hicham: If you press, it breaks. You have to be [in a soft voice] very careful, careful. Some women have no patience.

Faiz [with a smile on his face]: When they are menstruating…

Hicham: With menstruation they get aggressive, so you are careful and you say yes, yes, yes, to everything.

The men laugh, including trainer Nadir, who at this point is laughing out loud.

Farid: So, patience, careful…

Hicham: Or you have to go to the general practitioner. Maybe she has psychological problems. I know someone, his wife went to a psychiatrist, and after that it was much better.

Young man: You have to be there for your wife, also in the bedroom. If you don't, a woman can get moody. She will think you are not a real man.

Hicham: Buy a good perfume. (O8-7)

This interaction shows that the men, at this point in the project, without being pushed in this direction, reflected on how to handle conflict between spouses and even women's sexual needs are taken into account (although the atmosphere is giddy rather than serious). According to Nadir, it has been difficult to discuss relationships with partners in the past, and they aim to let the men talk about it more openly (I8-2 Nadir). The above illustrates that it was still done somewhat superficially and indirectly, for example by asking a "what if" question instead of talking about their personal situations. Being considerate about a woman's wishes, being kind and talking, was what men advised each other to do in a conflict at home (except for the "back to Morocco" joke), but there also seems to be a less of a gender equality subtext than one about getting one's wife to agree to sex or at least to get her to agree to a man's own wishes.

Between two normative frames: gender equality and conservative religious machismo

In one meeting, Samir, who sits among the men as a participant, asked the other participants their opinion of a man visiting the house when their wife is home alone. The discussion shows that men have different thoughts about the issue.

Samir (professional & participant): Does a man come to your house when your wife is there?

> *Faiz: I think that is no problem, if I'm there. Otherwise, no.*
>
> *Samir: We have little trust in other people.*
>
> *Ahmed: I think it is strange, really! A woman goes to the market and sees thousands of men. What is the difference? (O8-7)*

The quote shows how some of the participants say they would restrict their wives from talking with other men, while Ahmed sees nothing wrong with other men visiting. The conversation that followed remains hypothetical (again) and personal issues remain undiscussed.

In an earlier meeting in which raising sons and daughters was discussed, some men said that there is a difference. Girls currently have limited freedom compared to boys, according to some of the participants (O8-6). Ahmed, who was also more progressive in the example above, was an exception, saying that he is for equality where it comes to raising boys and girls, and that he does not restrict his wife from meeting men in- or outside of the house (O8-6; O8-7). The men who do say they in some ways restrict their daughters justify the inequality between raising boys and girls by saying that they are protective, for example where it concerns their daughters' virginity, whereas for boys this does not matter (O8-6; also in interview IAhmed). When Nadir suggests this is unfair, Samir says that might be the case, but that it is the way they are raised, which he sees as difficult to change.

In an interview with professional Nadir (in 2013, after the project had been running for two and a half years) it becomes clear that, in his experience, some of these men do restrict their wives and daughters. Some do not let their wives work because that would mean she would meet other men. Others are less restrictive, for economic reasons. The woman in such a case is allowed to work because they need the income. At the same time, some of the men view this as highly problematic. Nadir explains how strongly some men feel about needing to be a breadwinner and keeping their wife from contact with other men.

> *Imagine a man with few skills, who is not able to get a job, and the woman, because they receive benefits [is obliged to apply for a job.] The woman then is not allowed to work [by the man], why? Because she will become the breadwinner and then she has to go outside, and [if she does not apply for jobs] the benefits will stop. The position of the man gets very difficult, and then the men say: "We'd rather live on [lower] benefits than that our wives work." And when that was mentioned, they wanted to give an argument why. Then this young man stood up, he really stood up, and very emotionally he said: "I am a window-cleaner and one day I saw a sister with a headscarf [a Muslim woman]. She was cleaning, and that Dutchman was sitting there on a chair with shorts on. How is that possible?"(I8-2)*

In this quote, Nadir explains that for some men it is difficult to cope with the way women are pushed to be in working environments in the presence of other men, especially if they are alone

with a man who is not "properly" dressed. Having a wife as a breadwinner is also objectionable for some men. Nadir explained that, in practice, many men did "allow" their wives to work in order to be able to make ends meet. Interviews with participants also confirmed this (IAhmed; IAbdel; INordin). It was not only men, furthermore, who preferred a "traditional" way of organizing care and work. Omar, for example, preferred his wife to work, but she wanted him to be the breadwinner (IOmar).

Nadir thinks that some of the participants present themselves as more religious, strict, or pious in the group than they might be in practice. Sometimes in the meetings the men get into a competitive flow and boast about how restrictive or pious they are, presenting themselves as more conservative than the next man, expressing a conservative religious kind of machismo.

> *That's what I think, that there are two things: The whole group is together and then it is like, the more extreme you are, the tougher you are, the best father you are. That is one. Reality is different. Reality forces such a family, for financial reasons, or to go on holiday, to have to compromise. So they are forced because of financial situations. So, I think, because they sit together in a group, that increases the macho behaviour (...). Those ideas, they give you status within the group: The more pious you are, the higher the status. (I8-2)*

According to Nadir, the men switch between two kinds of norm structures: one pushed them to agree with (limited) gender equality and the other to say things that are perhaps more religiously conservative and gender unequal than the way they behave in their everyday life. Both norm structures were heard in the meetings, but according to Nadir the latter, "pious macho" norms were stronger.

As for their daughters, according to Nadir, many men in the group wanted to make sure they behave modestly and remain a virgin until they marry. The men encouraged them to finish their education, but to some of the men what happens to them after they marry would be the choice of the future husband. At least, that is what he heard some of the more vocal men say in some of the meetings.

In an observation as well as in an interview with Nordin, I have learned that in order to connect to the men's religious perspective, the trainers collected quotes from the Koran and texts about the life of Mohammed that were about women and showed that Islam was less restrictive regarding women than the men perhaps thought (INordin see 5.2.4). This shows how the trainers are trying to work with the two norm structures that the men deal with in order to encourage the men to have more gender equal norms in a way that fits their religious norm structure and opposes the misogynist "pious machismo". Another way to oppose unequal values was by planning a debate together with women.

A planned debate with women

Because the men in some of the meetings expressed gender-unequal values – whether they were their actual everyday opinions or pious macho boasts – Nadir one day proposed organizing a discussion in which they could discuss gender relations with women. The ensuing deliberations

with the men about how they would organize such a meeting and who they could invite resulted in an interesting classification of the types of women with whom the group thought it would be relevant or irrelevant to have such a discussion (I8-2).

Firstly, according to Nadir, the men singled out their own wives, who could not be invited to a discussion meeting because there would be a risk of creating conflict within their marriages. Secondly, there were Nadir's (Muslim) female colleagues, who were educated professionals. These were also not seen as the right women to have a discussion with, because they were not religious enough and therefore their opinions did not matter. These women were seen as "lost" to Islam, even if they were Muslim (I8-2). Thirdly, the men distinguished non-Muslim women as irrelevant for the same reasons and because they were seen as outsiders. Still, the men were willing to have these women attend meetings, or to be interviewed by them (like I did). According to Nadir, the men were actually interested in giving their view about social issues to this category of women because it was a chance to be heard, which they generally felt they were not. Fourth, the women who *were* suitable to invite were women whom the men called their "sisters": other "piously" religious Muslim women. These would be "accepted" as women to have a discussion with on one condition: that they would not be in the same room.

According to Nadir, the participants said that they could not be in the same room with women during a discussion. The discussion therefore had to take place in two separate rooms: one for women and one for men, or in one room with a dividing wall in between. Communication would take place via an electronic audio connection (Nadir laughed to highlight how bizarre this idea is to him).

In the end, there never was such a discussion, due to these complicated requests and a lack of time. If they actually would organize such a discussion, according to Nadir, the men would be more flexible and willing to talk with women in the same room, and with different "types" of women, because it would be more practical. Although the discussion did not take place, the idea that women's opinions are crucial where values about gender relations are concerned presented the group of men with an alternative, more gender equal perspective. At the same time, though, the plan to organize such a separate discussion strengthened separation and inequality between men and women based on religious beliefs.

My observations in this project and the interviews with Nadir show that there was some attention for gender relations (i.e. their relationship with their partner, and the issue of raising boys and girls). In an earlier stage of the project, in 2011, this attention was implicit and slipped in via other topics. In 2013, the men more explicitly discussed gender equality and their relationships with women. However, discussing gender with the men was difficult and did not always lead to shared values in favour of gender equality. Whether the men expressed more gender equal or conservative religious and unequal values depended on the interactions in the group. The professionals and some participants (for example Ahmed) offered a (more) gender equal perspective. The professionals did so by highlighting the importance of perspectives of women, for example by suggesting the idea of inviting women for a discussion. The professionals thus offered room for reflection and functioned as a mirror to the men by critically asking them to explain their views and stressing the perspectives of women on the issue.

3.2.3 Case Study 2 conclusion: observed impact on gender + equality

The articulated aims of this project were to create more awareness about the role of men as fathers and in that way contribute to gender equality and guide the fathers into taking up volunteer work. The volunteer work was aimed at disciplining neighbourhood youth by patrolling the streets and by offering activities in order to keep the youth from loitering. The participants themselves had shown that they felt engaged by these goals. They wanted to do something about loitering youth, not only for the good of the neighbourhood, but also to do something against their negative stigma as an ethnic group in the Netherlands. On the initiative of professionals, "emancipation" became a more central topic to the project in its third year (2013), emancipation understood here with the double meaning of (two-sided) gender equality and the advancement of men themselves (see 2.2.3). In the communications with participants the term emancipation was (carefully) used, in those cases leaning more towards the advancement of men themselves.

The observations show that the project's practices were aimed at improving men's social locations. Men were encouraged to reflect on how to improve their own situation; they had lessons on parenting skills that were aimed at offering children more possibilities to express themselves and for fathers to solve conflicts in more peaceful ways. The project thus also addressed the emancipation of children besides that of men and women. In the meetings about parenting, the men were encouraged – and encouraged each other – to express their thoughts about raising children and solving conflicts with their partners, which according to both professionals and participants was not common among this group of men before the project. The practices observed in this case study show that the men reflected on intimate relationships and on the (un)equal parenting of sons and daughters.

However, these reflections about gender did not always lead to a consensus about gender equal norms or behaviour, and the project was therefore not necessarily enabling for women. This project clearly showed how difficult it was to let men openly talk about their relationships with women, as the men often talked about relationships with women and raising their daughters in hypothetical terms, and the men sometimes articulated conservative gender-unequal views about their own role and those of women. Participants sometimes boasted about their "piousness" and conservatism, performing a kind of conservative religious machismo. When that happened, the (male) professionals had an important role in questioning the "fairness" of their opinions and suggesting they look at issues from women's perspectives too. Suggesting to organize a discussion about gender relations with women in order to also hear women's opinions was an example of such a way of highlighting women's perspectives; the professionals' suggestion alone was already an act of questioning inequality. Yet the discussions also constructed a collective norm of pious gender inequality.

This case study shows a group of men in the process of reinterpreting their identity as (Muslim) men in the Netherlands, which is strongly related to the way they are normalized and the way they want to control their own norms. Parts of the discussions reveal that men try to hold on to strong conservative (religious) opinions in which unequal relationships or roles between women and men are the norm. The professionals say that some of the men have a fear of being forced to assimilate (in Dutch Nadir called this: "*assimilatie-angst*"). At other moments, the men recalibrate their norms and behaviour to better match their current Dutch context.

Professionals, using a bottom-up/top-down strategy (just as in the first case study), encouraged the men to reflect. Self-reflection and defining one's own directions for change are seen as ways in which these men could make their own changes, including towards more gender equality. They chose bottom-up/top-down strategies (in this case: encouraging reflection, asking critical questions, and letting men discuss amongst themselves) because these create a sense of strength and belonging, while at the same time making it possible to address topics that are relevant to the professionals. The professionals, however, were careful not to force their opinions on the men too much, as this would run the risk of alienating them.

The local context of this project was characterized by a small-town environment and a (relatively) homogeneous group of working-class men with a Moroccan background, many of whom were from the 1.5 generation, having spent part of their youth in Morocco and part in the Netherlands and some lacking contact with their father during part of their childhood. This shared background made it possible to share these experiences with a group of men that could relate to their situation. The observations and interviews also showed that self-reflection about values and (gender) identity with a homogeneous group of conservative religious men does not self-evidently lead to the articulation of gender equal norms, and that piousness and expressing unequal values in a competitive atmosphere can offer a strengthened sense of manhood, which the men might not have access to in other ways. The observations and interviews indicate that women's perspectives (by male professionals and some more progressive participants) offered the men counter-narratives to which they could compare their own views.

The younger age and better health of the men compared to Case Study 1 made it easier to involve them in volunteer work. This difference, however, is not clear-cut, as this project, too, had men with health problems and there were healthy men in the first project as well.

The small-town context made it possible for the men to compare what they were saying to how they acted in practice, as many knew each other. The same context prevented some of the men from explicitly talking about their personal situation, for fear of gossip. Problems were often articulated as hypothetical situations instead of actual experiences (which also happened in the first case study, but even more so in this case study).

Compared to the first case study, having the larger welfare organization behind the project offered the professionals the possibility to hire external professionals and develop their own method of discussing "male emancipation". Just like in the first case study, though, the professionals were very involved with the group. Sharing their background (and language) helped the professionals to connect to the participants. At the same time, two of the professionals had had very different life experiences compared to the participants: they were highly educated and had progressive values, which offered them the possibility to do bridging work. The long local involvement of some of the professionals, who managed to solve some conflicts in the neighbourhood, further ensured a close connection to the men.

Just as in the first case study the gender equality goals of the project faded over time, which was adjusted for by the writing of a second project plan in which "emancipation" was more central. After that second plan, "emancipation" had a more frontstage role and gender equality was not only formulated as a goal among the professionals, but also in communication with participants (see 2.5 for the backstage and frontstage distinction). This was still done carefully, "tiptoeing" when communicating about gender equality goals. The professionals did this both because they wanted to take into account the men's fear of being forced to assimilate, which can be seen as a an attack on their (masculine or human) identity, and because

professionals preferred egalitarian strategies in order to have an enabling instead of a constraining impact.

The intervention can be considered enabling in the sense that it increased the men's possibilities to achieve their goals of improving the neighbourhood, the possibilities for their children, and their reputation as Moroccan immigrants. Participants indicated that they saw it as their role to be a good example in order to transform stereotypical attitudes (even though through normalization, or normification in Goffman's terms; 1963/2009), while the professionals tried to limit this sense of responsibility, because according to them it can have disempowering (constraining) effects to feel responsible (take the blame) for problems the men have nothing to do with. It is in fact this externally attributed responsibility that forms the stigma the men suffer. At the same time, some men strongly feel they want to hold on to some traditional norms, which for some includes the unequal role of men and women in the family.

This second case study, like in the first, has a combination of enabling, constraining, normalizing, and liberating practices. This project, however, is more grounded in the participants' collective sense of urgency. This urgency mainly concerned improving the situation of children, the neighbourhood, and their reputation as Moroccan immigrants – not improving the situation of women, which was one of the other aims of the professionals. The goal of improving gender equality and therefore enhancing women's possibilities eventually manifested in discussions about relationships with women and about the equal treatment of girls and boys. The discussions led not only to the articulation of views for more gender equality, but also that of the wish to keep constraining women (the men would say "protecting"). These views were called into question by professionals and some of the participants by emphasizing "fairness" and the importance of women's perspectives.

3.3 Case study 3:

Travellers and Citizens: Young, white, stigmatized, and unemployed men (and one woman)

> In 2013, I joined a group of (white) young men and one young woman in a project that taught them to become activity leaders for children and other young people. Every Tuesday, we gathered at a youth centre, all wearing sports clothes and the grey hoodies offered by the project. On Thursdays, there were cooking classes and other courses: about communicating with children and handling conflict. The youth centre was in a dark central space of an old school building with graffiti on the wall, two couches, a ping-pong table, and a bar. We would gather there and talk informally. During the trainings, a coach explained how we should behave and present ourselves in front of a group in order to be an activity leader: using our posture, the way we dressed, and by acting as role models. Sometimes one or two of the participants would clearly have other things on their minds, at these times they hardly responded to questions, sat back on the coach, a cap or hood pulled low over their face. Negative moods and personal troubles sometimes developed into conflicts with each other, with the trainer, or with one of the volunteers. On a small field outside we practiced explaining games to each other: games with balls, games of tag, or creative forms of hide and seek. We switched leadership roles and evaluated each other after each game. During the games, troubles and conflicts most of the time seemed forgotten. At other times the games led to conflicts about the way the rules were set up, about the way feedback was given. Slowly I got to know more about the participants, half of whom had traveller backgrounds, which is an outsider position in the local community and in the Netherlands as a whole. I also learned about their troubles with drugs, criminality, and violence within the family, for which some wanted a solution and others saw no perspective for change (excerpt from observation diary, August 2013).

The project in this case study was organized in a village with fewer than 10.000 inhabitants in a rural area in the Netherlands and focused on young men from a white traveller community. The travellers who participated in this project came from families who (used to) live in mobile homes. As a travelling group of people, they have long been stigmatized and excluded by settled communities.[40]

Originating from craftspeople, salespeople, and labourers travelling between village communities looking for work[41], travellers have become a minority in the context of repressive policies. At several points in history, travellers have been forced to live in camps. Sometimes the

[40] There are also indications of more positive relationships in the past, as settled residents could benefit from the crafts, business, and labour of the travelling people (Cottaar 1996).

[41] At the beginning of the 20th century, living in a mobile home or wagon used to be just a type of housing and not a characteristic of any (cultural or ethnic) minority. The mechanization of farm work pushed families to be flexible in their search for farm or other work, and the construction of a network of paved roads made it possible to travel with heavier, larger wagons able to house a whole family (Cottaar 1996).

policy was to concentrate travellers in bigger camps, and at other times the policy was to scatter them into smaller camps. During WWII, travellers staying in the Netherlands were forcibly removed from their mobile homes.[42] When the surviving travellers returned after the war, the population in mobile homes grew again, especially because a lack of regular housing pushed people who would otherwise live in regular houses to mobile homes. In the 1960s, a so-called "extinction policy" was developed to slowly outlaw mobile homes (in Dutch: *uitsterfbeleid*). Leaving one's mobile home for a fixed address would result in never being allowed to live in a mobile home again, unless one was to marry someone from within the community with a mobile home, which encouraged marrying within the community. The "extinction policy" and earlier repressive initiatives gave the travellers a stronger sense of identity as a minority community (Cottaar 1996).

According to the project plan, travellers formed the most important target group because of their isolated position, and the project also included other young men, some of whom were understood as being "close to the travellers". The combination was aimed to reach more young men with similar problems and to do something about the isolated position of the travellers. The aim was to activate young unemployed men and empower them. The "traditional gender roles" of men and women were identified as an important problem of the traveller community. Solutions to this gender inequality problem were not explicitly formulated in the project plan, however, there were some activities aimed at gender equality (P11), in a planned discussion on discrimination, for example, the aim was to also talk about prejudices against women, and there were cooking classes.

I participated in the project 21 times in the spring of 2013. In 2011 and 2012, I also visited the organization, at which point the project was set up quite differently and its target group of "socially isolated" men was less specific, but these observations are less relevant to the case study. The main organizer of the project, Susan, changed the focus to this group in 2013.

Professionals and volunteers

Susan is the social worker (a white Dutch woman in her late twenties) who organized the project. In an interview she explained that she had long wanted to organize a project for traveller youth from this local community. Her interest in this group started as a teenager, when she herself used to hang out with groups of kids with traveller backgrounds. At that time, the village considered the rowdy groups of young men and women a nuisance. At the time of the research, there were still some of these groups left. Susan remained intrigued by the traveller community, including the gender relations within the community, which she saw as problematic because of unequal roles and frequent incidents of domestic violence (I11-2).

Susan used an outreach approach that went beyond that of many other social workers I have encountered. She established informal contacts with the community by visiting them at home, also when there were no issues demanding immediate action, to build up relationships and keep track of what was going on. She established a strong relationship by helping people but also by socializing informally.

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[42] In 1944, under orders of the Nazi occupiers, many travellers were arrested through raids on Roma people conducted by Dutch policemen and local politicians. The Roma and a smaller number of white travellers were brought to the Westerbork concentration camp in the Netherlands. There, the non-Roma travellers were ultimately released, in contrast to the Roma travellers who were deported to Auschwitz (Cottaar 1996:215).

Besides Susan, one professional trainer and three volunteers were involved in the project. The trainer, Brian, is a man in his forties with an Afro-Caribbean background. He was connected to an organization offering educational programs for young men who wanted to become "activity leaders". His experience in working with difficult groups of men such as prisoners was recognizable, for example in the way he managed to calm down and motivate young men in the group in cases of conflict. He did this by establishing contact with them through talking, but also through physical contact: a hand on the participant's shoulder or neck. He moreover showed a sense of humour, which he used in his contact with the group.

The volunteers were two men and a woman, Rob, Frank, and Claudia, who were all in their fifties and had the role of the participants' "mentors". None of them had traveller backgrounds. In the previous version of the project (2011-2012), Rob (white Dutch) was a participant and later a volunteer. After a severe depression, Rob got back in touch with "society" through the project. According to Susan, Rob is her right-hand man in the project. Frank (white), is a retired manager of a local bank location, and came across as down to earth and pragmatic. Claudia has a mixed white Dutch and Afro-Caribbean background, and used to work as a nurse. As part of the program, she also taught the Thursday-afternoon cooking classes besides her contribution as a mentor. All three volunteers in the project were mentors of two or three participants. If participants had questions or personal problems they could contact their mentor.

Additionally, there were professionals involved who offered thematic courses. Laura, a social worker (also with a mixed white Dutch and Afro-Caribbean background), offered a training about handling conflict and aggression. Birgit, a white Dutch woman, gave a training about communicating with children and also addressed stereotypes. Lastly, there was an intern, Danny, who has a traveller background and is a cousin of three of the participants. He was often at the youth centre where the project took place, but was not actively involved in the project. He sometimes influenced the interaction in the group though, and was an important source of information for Susan, who learned about the traveller community by talking with him. Danny was seen as a possible role model for the group, as he was learning to be a social worker after previously having been involved in selling drugs.

Project goals: Increasing self-esteem

The project plan (P11-2 2013) describes the target group as "young men with distance to participation". Sometimes the plan mentions young men in general terms and sometimes specifically as travellers. In the plan, the travellers are referred to as "Kampers". Within the traveller community, this term is seen as a pejorative (Cottaar 1996; IJan; IKees), because it is often used in an insulting way and because it identifies them as residents of fixed camps, which historically has been involuntary. The word is problematized at the beginning of the project plan, saying the group prefer to be called travellers (in Dutch: *reizigers*) instead. In the rest of the text, the plan uses the word "Kampers" with quotation marks.

According to the project plan, the young men have problems with "social isolation", "low self-esteem", "drug and alcohol abuse", "behavioural disorders", "lack of social and problem solving skills", "violence", and "criminality". These problems with the young men in general and with traveller youth in particular are framed in a similar way. With regard to the travellers, however, there is more emphasis on "social or cultural isolation":

> *The "Kampers" community is known in [X] as causers of nuisance. Because of their upbringing they often don't have the social skills that are needed to find the necessary connections in society. (P11-2)*

"Nuisance" is specified as "dealing drugs and stolen goods, aggression, and drug use". Additionally, the project plan mentions that there is a risk of domestic violence.

> *There is a higher risk of aggression and violence in the domestic sphere, unwanted behaviour, and and excessive use of alcohol and/or drugs. Lack of social and problem-solving skills and the presence of a behaviour disorder cause criminality. (P11-2)*

Moreover, "traditional gender roles" are described as characteristic of "Kampers" and are here specified as having children at a young age, women who stay at home and take care of children and do household tasks, "family honour", and gaining status by using aggression (P11-2:5).

"Social isolation" and "cultural exclusion are framed as the root of all the listed problems. Yet the plan leaves unmentioned who is excluding whom: "People", according to the project plan, "are cut off from dominant patterns of behaviour, life orientation, and values". "Cultural isolation" is here explained as a lack of contact with people outside of the traveller community, which is seen as the cause of a "lack of self-confidence", "mistrust of people outside of their community", and "behavioural problems".

Problems with discrimination are touched upon briefly by saying that the young men "strongly feel that they are discriminated against". This way of seeing discrimination as a feeling ignores the reality of problems with discrimination (see also Chapter 2 and Case Study 1). Remarkably, the project plan does mention that: "They are not allowed to enter shops, are rejected for jobs, and have little contact with other citizens". But this is not noted as evidence of discrimination.

The project plan makes two interesting implicit references to masculinity. The first covers the way the young men are perceived by others, the way they present themselves as confident strong men, and the way they understand themselves:

> *Often the abilities of these men are overestimated because of their strong verbal way of expressing themselves, but they underestimate themselves, which causes them to fail in work environments and stagnate in terms of personal development. (P11-2)*

The plan indicates that there is a dissonance between how the young men see themselves and what they are capable of: they are capable of more than they think. There is also a dissonance between what others think they are capable of and what they are capable of: some people think they can do more than they can actually handle because of the macho way they express

themselves, which makes them seem more self-confident than they are. This last misconception causes people to ignore the men's insecurities and problems, and focus only on the problems they cause.

The second reference to masculinity is made when the plan highlights that men first need to have the feeling they are meaningful, or "significant" (*van betekenis*), "before they can take a next step" (P11-2: 8). The plan indicates that this is a lesson learned from the project experiences in 2011 and 2012. Involving the men in sports and recreational activities is then mentioned as a gender-specific approach to do so, the first step to improve lives of disadvantaged men and those around them.

The project goals are to involve men in activities and thus raise their self-confidence. The men are going to be involved in a project in which they learn to organize sports and recreational activities. How this would solve their problems is phrased like this:

> *To let [them] experience what it means to take action yourself. They can start trusting and building on the experiences they acquire by realizing their own desires, ambitions, and qualities, for themselves and their environment.*

The intention to realize the participants' "desires, ambitions" for their environment can be seen as a very implicit reference to the aim of improving the lives of women by working with men. The project aims to positively influence the self-confidence of the men through physical practices rather than verbal ones. Moreover, they plan to pay more attention to positive experiences in the interaction with the young men than to problems: "We share out experiences, do not hunt down problems [; we use] everyday methods, and informal and cordial contact with the target group" (P11-2).

Some of the more specific activities were aimed at gender equality. The project aimed to organize cooking classes which, according to Susan, were aimed at involving men in household tasks. The plan also articulated an aim to discuss "communication with children" and "stereotypes", including "stereotypes about women". In an interview, Susan indicated that there was a taboo on talking about intimate relationships within the traveller community, and that she found it hard to make the issue an explicit part of the project. She explained that she aimed to look for ways to do so during the project, for example by informally talking about private issues during the project. She also hoped that, as the young men would start feeling better about themselves and develop more plans for the future, this would lead to less frustration and violence (ISusan-2).

The emphasis on participation, physical activities, and emotionally empowering contact shows that despite the framing of gender inequality as a problem in the local traveller community, there were limited plans to involve men in gender equality issues or to do something about the indicated inequalities.

Reaching young stigmatized men: establishing a fragile contact

The participants of this project were mostly reached through established but fragile contacts with the traveller community. They were also reached by moving the project to a strategic location, a youth centre, and by word-of-mouth promotion.

As said earlier, Susan invested time in her contacts with the traveller community. She also indicated, however, that this contact was fragile and that, although her interest and help was appreciated, there was still a lot of mistrust and hostility towards outsiders, especially institutions that were seen as close to (local) government. Laura, the other social worker, had also established relationships with traveller families and recommended young men she knew to participate in the project. A girlfriend of one of these young men also wanted to participate and, in order to make sure her boyfriend would join in, she was allowed as well.

In order to better reach the new target group of young men, Susan changed the location from a neighbourhood centre with mostly elderly visitors to a youth centre located in a residential area, and regular visitors at the youth centre were interested in participating. In the end, her efforts resulted in a small group of seven young men and one young woman participating in the project.

Becoming activity leaders, learning how to cook, communicating with children, and controlling aggression

The main part of the project consisted of a course in which the participants learned to lead a group in doing a sports activity or a game. These lessons took place over ten weekly sessions. Participants also had to individually complete a 15-hour internship in which they had to apply what they learned. At the end of the project there was a test, and participants who passed received an official certificate, which offered them possibilities to work (as a volunteer) in youth work. The next level of the course, which one of the participants particularly aimed for, offered access to an educational program to become a sports coach. On Thursdays there was a parallel program in which the group had cooking lessons. There was also a course on how to better communicate with children, and during the program Susan decided to add a course in which part of the group learned to handle conflict and aggression. Additionally there were also recreational activities such as bowling, tennis, and a golf workshop. These activities were intended to make the program more attractive. When participants signed up they were expected to participate in all parts of the program.

Participants: travellers, citizens, and hicks

Of the eight participants who were in the project from April to June 2013, four belonged to the local traveller community, all of them were related. Kees (28), Jan (33), and Tinus (19) were cousins, and Cheryl (22) has been Kees' partner for seven years, and in that sense belonged to the traveller family. In interviews, the young travellers indicated that they identify as "Dutch travellers" (Tinus in O11-7; IKees; IJan). When asked about their background, Tinus and Jan stated they are not "Gypsies" or Roma, because they are from the Netherlands and Roma are not. According to them, the categories are often confused. Besides identifying as "Dutch", the young men also saw themselves as different from other white Dutch people. They called people outside of their traveller community "citizens" (*burgers*) or "hicks" (*boertjes* or *boerkes*, literally the

terms are a diminutive of farmers) (O11-7; I Susan). They used the term "citizen" in a way that contrasted their own identity as travelling people with people who live in houses and have a permanent relationship with a (local) government. Although the travellers now also live in fixed settlements, the use of the term "citizen" for non-travellers still demarcated the historical difference.

According to the traveller participants, the traveller community has strong family bonds, mostly interacting with people from within their own family community. They explained that, when there is a conflict with people from outside the community, a group of cousins would stick up for each other and accompany each other in confrontations or fights (IJan; IKees: ICheryl). They also accompanied each other for their non-violent contacts with the outside world. According to Susan, Jan, for example, did not want to take the theoretical component of his driving test on his own, because he would feel too uncomfortable. Instead, he arranged to take the test with some of his cousins, panicking when the date had to be changed because of delayed payments and he had to go on his own.

As a perk of being a traveller, Kees mentioned that (citizen) girls used to romanticize the traveller boys and their tough behaviour when they were younger, this made them popular in high school.

Besides their strong sense of family belonging and popularity with girls during their teenage years, some of the travellers who participated in the project also experienced negative consequences of their background, such as discrimination, for example when applying for jobs (IKees, IJan, I11-2). Living in a relatively small village community, the surrounding non-travellers recognized the surnames of the traveller family, and local employers would refuse to hire them when they knew they were travellers (IKees). Moreover, the traveller participants felt they were looked down upon. Jan, for example, experienced that others in the local community "feel they are really much better than them" and that they saw "kampers" as "completely at the bottom". He experienced this stigma through the disrespectful looks people in the community gave him, and the way they seemed to fear him.

> *What I always experience with those people that live here, they always look at us suspiciously, but I'm just a nice person. I would never hurt a human being, but people talk behind your back, speaking ill, and they are afraid, you know, and that is not what I want. (IJan-1)*

In the village, the family have been attributed an abusive nickname (I will use X as a pseudonym for the nickname). It is not clear where the name came from, nor when this name came in use. According to Kees, it could have been that his grandfather, who had many children, was given that nickname, which was then also used for his children and grandchildren. The name could also originate from one of the trades their ancestors used to ply (either cleaning or selling brushes), but could also just mean "dirty person" (similarly to the Dutch word *smeerpoets*). Though it is no longer recognizable as a swear word in Dutch, it has become a familiar term among people in the region who know the family. The word is also used within the family. Despite the negative connotation, the young men have turned the word into a nickname for themselves. In this way they have re-appropriated the pejorative into a name that bonds them (in

Dutch this would be called a *Geuzennaam*). Some even have tattoos stating they are "X for life, or, abbreviated, "XFL". This way they have made the symbol a part of their bodies and identities as a group (for life).

Social worker Susan, who visited the travellers at their homes, indicated that young children are also socialized with the name. "I have heard them say to the children: Hey little X, come on let's fight. Or: Hey X, go on, go and kiss the little girls." She said this to explain how the family, including women, raised their children with macho behaviour and taught them to "not to be a sissy" (IA2).

The young men also regularly referred to themselves as "kampers", although they knew it had a pejorative connotation. Compared to X, there was less pride in using that name, although the use of X is also ambiguous. The non-traveller participants knew the traveller family and their reputation, as they were raised in the same village. They were also familiar with the nickname. To them it was a self-evident term, a negative name for the traveller family living close by in a camp and in a specific village neighbourhood. Ben, who did not have a traveller background explained how he sees the term:

> *What an [X] is? (…) I think they mean, they are gypsies, only, how do you say it, a lesser kind (…), a bit more of the scumbag kind [rotzakkerig] or something. Yeah, I don't know exactly. I grew up with it, so it always used to be: The X this or that, or something. Yeah, it has always been that way, but I never had problems with them (….), but I think it is more a swearword for them. (Ben)*

According to Ben, it depends on who you are whether you can use the name. Though he would use it as a joke with the young men he knows from the project, "I wouldn't call someone I do not know: Hey X, come over here! Then they would get angry".

Besides the re-appropriated pejorative term, family members and close friends used individual nicknames, adding to the exclusive character and the tight bonds of their community. Another reason to use nicknames was because many men in the family shared the same first and last names (two of the participants and the intern had the same first name).[43] When they introduced themselves to outsiders, they used their official name. Besides the nicknames, the traveller participants often referred to each other as "cousin".

Adding to the negative side of the young men's experience as travellers, some members of the traveller families were known to the police for being involved in public disturbances and criminality (IKees, IJan, I11-2). Jan's parents were forced to move to another municipality because of nuisance complaints from the village neighbourhood. Jan (33) has a history of short-term prison sentences for theft and violence, which made him spend most of his adult and adolescent life behind bars since he was 13. According to Susan, he was regularly caught in fights and shoplifting. Jan would be the one who would respond most aggressively, or the police would go after him because they knew him. Jan once told Susan that he thinks some of his family members use him to take the blame for petty crimes, because they know he will get caught while they go unpunished.

[43] For clarity, I have given these participants different pseudonyms.

Furthermore, all three of the young traveller men are high-school drop-outs, Jan since the age of 12. Kees picked up his education at a later age and learned to be a gardener. Cheryl finished a lower vocational education to work in retail, and works as a shop assistant. Of the non-traveller participants, Peter is the only one from a middle-class family, the others have working-class backgrounds. Ben has not finished high school and Rick finished high school at a school for special education. Tom finished regular high school at the vocational level. Further adding to the problems of the participants, some had behavioural or mental health problems. Kees was diagnosed with depression and burnout; Ben and Tinus with "behavioural problems"; and Cheryl with borderline. Rick (white non-traveller) has spent most of his childhood in hospitals because of health problems.

In the next sections, I will show how toughness and violence turned out to be an important theme in the project practices, and analyse how gender equality was addressed.

3.3.1 Toughness and violence

Handling conflict and violence in project practices

My first impression of the participants was that these young tough guys protested against most of what the trainer or professionals would say to them. The way they presented themselves physically in their posture and the way they talked showed a combination of indifference and suspicion, as though they did not really care about the project, and as though the professionals and volunteers would try to do something with them that they would not agree with, even though they were there voluntarily. At the same time there was some curiosity about what was going to happen: the participants listened and asked questions to learn more about the program. If there was any sign of disrespect, however, if they suspected professionals were trying to change who they were or were looking down on them, some of the young men were ready to protest in a loud and angry voice. These reactions mostly came from Tinus, Ben, and Jan, but sometimes Cheryl or Kees would show similar reactions. The other three behaved more calmly and seemed to just want to get on with the activities. During the more physical activities, all participants turned into active and competitive participants and temporarily dropped their tough pose, except when there was disagreement.

The tough behaviour often proved difficult to combine with the educational situation of this leadership training. Brian, Susan, and the volunteers had to put a lot of time and energy in resolving conflicts and keeping the men participating. The conflicts were mostly expressions of anger, like shouting at each other or the trainer, threatening to quit the program, and sometimes throwing equipment. There was only one real fight, which I did not observe directly but heard about afterwards from Susan, the volunteers, as well as several participants. In this fight, one of the participants, Ben, hit another, Tinus, followed by threats of violence and of involving family members for a fight.

Especially at the beginning of the project, the tension in the group was palpable. Some of the men, especially Tinus and Ben, often did not hold back their anger over seemingly futile things.

Rick places pylons on the ground to make two goals for a game of football. Tinus says that the pylons are unequally placed: One goal is bigger than the other. Because Rick does not respond right away, Tinus starts yelling at him, saying that his cousins would destroy him if they had to play a game with unequal goals.

Brian, the trainer, tells Tinus to give his feedback in a different way, at which Tinus gets even more angry, saying he does not like the way Brian talks to him and raising his voice even more. He sounds very angry and wronged, and threatens to quit the project.

Brian responds that he does not like these kinds of threats and if he wanted him to leave, he would know exactly how to make him leave, but he wants him to "get to the finishing line".

Brian at first tried to correct the way Tinus gave feedback, resulting in more anger. By saying he wants Tinus to finish the project successfully and by mentioning the power he has to let him quit if he wanted to, Brian presented himself as an ally while at the same time emphasizing his authority as a trainer.

After the activities on the field were finished, Brian let Tinus reflect on what happened, repeating that Tinus should give his feedback in a different way. Tinus, continuing in an angry tone, explains that he sees the attempt to correct him as Brian trying to change him or his community:

Tinus: "That's just how we talk. I don't let myself be changed".

Brian: "I don't want to change who you are. I want to bring you a step further as a leader in sports and recreation".

In the example, Brian presents himself as someone who tries to help. He distinguishes between "who he is" (identity) and the direction he is going in. He claims this identity will not be changed, while at the same time guiding Tinus in a certain direction, which can mean improving his possibilities (social location), but disconnecting those from identity and social norms. When he says "taking him a step further" he disguises change by using the metaphor of a change of place/position ("further"), while keeping identity and norms the same. In this case the "step further" is meant to be enabling, while it can at the same time be considered normalizing. For Tinus, a fear of not being respected – which comes from being in a disadvantaged position as someone from a traveller community – seems to be at the base of his anger. At the same time, he might be just used to reacting to something he does not like in an angry voice. Still, he reacts especially angrily if someone comments negatively on something that he perceives as essential to his traveller culture.

Slowly, after a few weeks, Brian managed to motivate the group to participate without much protests. He gave Tinus a separate role in the group, as someone who would give feedback to others. Brian would ask Tinus to evaluate the other participants after they had been leading a game. Tinus learned to give his comments calmly, to list positive as well as negative comments in

a relaxed voice. Brian moreover used positive physical contact in his interaction with Tinus, a hand on his shoulder or neck. showing a personal connection but also some authority. He would take him aside, on the side of the field, to give him separate instructions. Tinus seemed to be pleased with this special treatment and even planned to finish the course on a higher level, in order to be able to be accepted at a school that would teach him to become a sports instructor.

However, towards the end of the project, an aggressive conflict between Tinus and Ben led to Tinus dropping out of the project. Tinus attacked Ben and grabbed him by the throat. Ben defended himself by hitting Tinus. After this fight, Tinus stirred up his cousins to fight Ben. Danny (the intern), however, told his other cousins that they should not fight because Tinus was the one who started the fight. According to Susan, this was exceptional because the expected reaction within the community would be to join the fight no matter what. She thought it was a sign of change towards a less excluded community and a positive development to which their efforts (including having Danny as an intern) had contributed (O11-14; ISusan-3). Her work in that sense, to her, contributed to the traveller youths' less excluded, less hostile, or less defensive collective social location and identity .

Besides Brian, Susan and the three volunteers also had an important role in calming down participants during conflicts. Susan would have talks in her office to ask about the reason for the conflict. She would also call participants or family members, or visit them to ask why someone did not show up. The volunteers made phone calls with the participants they were mentoring.

Underlying the conflicts, the participants were often dealing with tensions and troubles such as: trouble with a housing association, the municipality, upcoming trials, the neighbours, troubled (addicted) family members that were asking for their help, and domestic violence (as perpetrators, victims, or witnesses). Sometimes, insecurities and inexperience seemed to be at the base of their anger instead. In one meeting, Tinus was asked to lead the conversation about a day-long event he was expected to organize (as part of his higher-level training). He looked afraid to do so, seemed to be blocked, asked Susan to take over, and did not respond at all during the meeting. After Susan pushed him to answer questions, Tinus ended up being angry and saying he wanted to quit the whole program.

Oftentimes, reasons were articulated after a conflict had escalated. Some difficulties that caused anger and tension were unveiled in the conflict training I will discuss in the next section.

Conflict and aggression training

A two-day training on conflict and aggression was organized in order to make the participants more aware of how conflicts start and to give them more possibilities to prevent conflict. Not all participants were present at the meeting, only Tom, Kees, Cheryl. and Ben. Two of the volunteers. Rob and Claudia. attended the course as well. Social worker Laura led the two sessions. The training took place at the youth centre. Rob filmed part of the session, but turned off the camera when Ben asked for it as he started to talk about some of his problems in the past.

Laura started by asking: "What is conflict? When do you have a conflict?" On a flip chart, she wrote down the keywords that the participants came up with, for example: "arguing", "frustration", "burnout", "depression", "stress", "calling names", "disagreeing". Laura continued with asking more about "arguing" (*ruziën*).

Laura: What is arguing?

Cheryl: Two people who are angry with each other.

Ben: It can be more people.

Kees: Emotions, Anger and, uhm, what do you call that? I know it, but I can't explain it. Things in society that bother you, but I don't know what to call it.

Laura: To feel misunderstood? [Kees is looking for another word, but can't find it; Laura continues] First you have a conflict with yourself and then you express it to someone else. (…) Before you reach that point, can you do something yourself? Before you get to that point? [A short silence. Laura does not await the answer] What happens if you don't?

Ben: Explosion!

Cheryl: You take it out on someone else.

Laura: What happens? You cross a boundary, you lose yourself and lose control. When you pass that boundary, you cannot stop being angry. What happens in that moment?

The participants give several answers: "You have a problem." "You do things you later regret." "You try to escape."

Laura: You've got aggression. You've got a problem with yourself and you take it out on another person. (O11-12)

In this quote, conflict is understood as coming from persons crossing each other's personal boundaries. Conflict, according to Laura, originates from "problems with yourself". Though Kees says that "things in society" bother him, this contrast is ignored in this interaction, as Laura continues to suggest that "being misunderstood" is an important part of what causes conflict.

Laura suggested that failure in communication is an important aspect of conflict: "It's about how to express what you think and how you feel". She wrote the words "transmitter" and "recipient" on the flip chart with undulating lines in between. Laura asked for solutions from the participants and offered some herself. Tom suggested it would be good to do sports when you are angry, to prevent you from "exploding". Laura added that it is important to know your boundaries and be clear about them to others. To practice, they did an exercise in which a person walks up to another person and they almost bump into each other. She showed that it is important to give a clear response in order to let the other person stop. She acted this out non-verbally by standing up straight and holding her hand up to signal the other to stop, while clearly saying stop. Furthermore, Laura played out some examples of different ways of communicating.

Laura: Tom, if I tell you: [in a loud voice:] You are late! [back to quiet voice:] What happens to you?

> *Tom: Cool it! [In Dutch, Tom says "Doe normaal!", which literally means "Act normal!"]*
>
> *Laura [in a slow and quiet voice]: In my opinion, we agreed to meet at ten.*
>
> *Tom: Then you feel you've been taken seriously. (O11-12)*

The quote shows that respectfully communicating without showing anger is represented as an important way to avoid aggression. Laura wrote on the flip chart: "Everyone wants to be seen, heard, and understood", and next to these words she summarized the three as: "to be taken seriously". She asked all participants one by one: "Do you want to be taken seriously?" One by one everyone answered yes.

Laura continued by asking Ben what would be a solution when someone spoke to him in an aggressive way.

> *Ben: Haha, I don't know. Things would go wrong.*
>
> *Laura: What would be a solution. What can you do?*
>
> *Ben: I don't know.*
>
> *Laura: You could ask: What do you mean? Why are you acting like this to me? (O11-12)*

Tom suggested making a joke about the issue. When Laura responded by asking what could be the consequence of making such jokes, Kees answered that he would not be taken seriously, referring to what was discussed before.

Ben responded enthusiastically to the advice: "Can't we do this every day? Because I need this. I go right into exploding. I have plenty of examples". He then gave examples of conflicts he has had with his neighbours, many of whom had complained about him. One of the complaints was about his dog, which was often barking. Ben also brings up an example from the last training with Brian, when he did not feel like leading the first group right at the start of the course session because the problems with his neighbours and the housing corporation were troubling him. If it would have been possible to participate in a physical activity first, he explained, he would have felt less anger and would have been fine to lead the next group. At the time, though, Ben had refused to participate without giving an explanation to Brian. When Brian got angry at him, Ben threw a piece of equipment onto the field and he had to leave the session. Out of sight of the group he "exploded", demolishing a bike and breaking part of the pavement. During the course, he said it would have been better to have walked up to Brian in advance and explained to him that he had some troubles at home, instead of becoming angry at him and refusing to participate.

The next day, the same group continued. Participants who were not there the day before were sent away, because, according to Laura, the group had bonded the day before and now trusted each other with their personal stories. Laura asked the group to reflect on what happened

the day before. Ben said that he had thought about that a lot and that he especially thinks he gets angry because of "injustice". He then starts talking about what has been bothering him for a long time, listing the following issues:

> *When I was five I saw a man being killed in front of my eyes and my sister was raped a few times, but she would not allow me to talk about it, because he [the rapist] would do something to my father if it was found out… And my mother left when I was three.*

Ben said that his sister's rape was what still bothers him the most, and that he would kill the perpetrator if he knew who he was. Laura tried to convince Ben that it would not help anyone, including his sister if he would go to jail. The rest of the session, the others also started talking about problems in their chidlhood: more cases of rape, abuse, and drug abuse.

Kees and Cheryl spoke about how Kees' father is often at their house since he divorced Kees' mother, and that it is hard to have him over all the time, especially because Kees is dealing with his burnout. According to Kees, it was impossible to refuse him because that would not be accepted within his family. Laura emphasized that you can change that. In more general terms, she said: "You are able to change your own behaviour, and with your own behaviour you influence how others behave." Rob (one of the volunteers) added that the participants have a choice. Kees protested and said he has not had much choices in life. He explained that what the others talk about are things from the past, whereas his problems are going on right now.

> *Kees: What do you think of this choice then? I can't work, but I have to work because I don't get any money otherwise, and I don't want to lose my house and get more depressed, ending up in a breakup with my girlfriend. I first need therapy before I can work. How much choice do I have?*
>
> *[Kees has been on a waiting list to get into therapy for half a year. Rob continues to say that he does have a choice]*
>
> *Kees: But it is society, right? …what makes you go under? (O11-13)*

In his perception, Kees' feelings of anger and depression were caused by problems "in society". This can be seen as a reference to bureaucracy and the waiting list for his therapy, but also to growing up in a problematic family and a stigmatized community.

Although Laura and Rob clearly aimed to understand the background of the participants' aggressive behaviour, they still tried to highlight that the participants have a choice in the way they behave. Laura, like Rob, suggested that the participants should realize that they have a choice in improving their situation. This way she empowered the participants but also emphasized the responsibility they themselves have in solving their aggression issues. They furthermore ignored the problems in which participants did not have a choice.

At first it seemed that Tinus was making the greatest changes in his tough and aggressive behaviour, until the physical confrontation with Ben. From someone who was one of the toughest guys and would talk back to everyone, Ben became someone who actively participated, was able to lead a group, and worked with the other participants to organize a day of activities for children. On the last day of the project, he came up with an activity that says a lot about the change he had gone through. The group had organized activities for a group of children from a Polish orphanage. The children, who were around 10 years old, were visiting the village on their summer holiday. The activity Ben organized was to ask the children (someone from the orphanage translated) to paint things they were angry about on a large piece of paper. After they had finished, he let the children throw water balloons at the piece of paper – a large water balloon fight soon started.

According to Ben himself, an important moment that caused him to change was the conflict and aggression training in which he explained the reasons for his anger,and learned ways to stop conflicts before it came to "exploding". This shows the importance of paying attention to a participant's identities and emotions, their feeling of belonging, if you want to change someone's attitude and willingness to improve their social location. (The participants' openness about their personal experiences is striking compared to Cases 1 and 2). It is furthermore striking that it was the least disadvantaged person in the group (in a structural sense) who managed to improve his situation the most, while most traveller participants struggled, dropped out of the project, and continued to encounter problematic situations related to their disadvantaged position.

Toughness and violence in lives of participants

The tough attitude of the traveller participants, according to Kees and Susan, is performed and cultivated in the traveller families' everyday interactions and in the way they raise their children. On her house visits, Susan has noticed that parents encourage little boys to fight with each other. Kees explained that not every family within their community raises their children in the same way, and that his home had more structure, while at Tinus' home the children could do whatever they liked. Jan, who is a father of three, emphasized the importance of being tough or emotionally hardened several times during activities. In a training about how to communicate with children, for example, a trainer asked him how he would respond if a child would fall and injure itself, and Jan responded that he would say that it would make them tough.

Besides this tough behaviour and the idealization of tough masculinity, there were (even) more serious issues with violence going on in the lives of the young men. A non-traveller "citizen girl" came to Susan for help , for instance, because she wanted to break up with one of the participants. She had even at one point jumped out of a (first-floor) window out of fear she would get beaten. She had lost contact with her own family and friends, and found it difficult to get back to them for support. According to Susan, women in this traveller community are regularly beaten up if they break up with a traveller and start dating someone else. She says that according to Danny this is ingrained in the culture of the traveller community, which to her explains the number of abuse cases. Beating up women after a breakup or after she gets a new partner is also a known pattern in studies on domestic violence, just as the increased risk of domestic violence in cases of alcohol and drug abuse (Coleman 1997; Melton 2007), which in itself is also a known problem in the local traveller community, making it a difficult issue to

battle. Susan in this case decided to not discuss the issue with the participant because she promised the girl confidentiality. She did help the girl to re-establish contact with her family and helped her get counselling (though the girl did not leave her boyfriend during the fieldwork).

In my interviews some of the men themselves also talked about their experiences with violence in the past. Kees had experienced domestic violence in his home as a child. His father regularly beat up his mother to the extent that she often ended up in hospital. A year prior to the project his mother fled to a safe house and asked for a divorce. According to Susan, this is quite unusual within the community, because it would be seen as betrayal of the husband as well as of the community. In an interview, Kees says that domestic violence is a large problem, also with other family members, including the younger ones. According to him it is very difficult to interfere, for the generation of his parents it is impossible to discuss. For the younger generation, he sees more possibilities to discuss the issue. Cheryl and Kees themselves regularly had fights in which Susan tried to mediate. At one point Kees showed her scratches and bruises on his chest which Cheryl had inflicted. According to Kees, he had never beaten Cheryl, although I have seen him behave towards her in aggressive ways.

Ben (not a traveller background) also had an issue with violence shortly before the project. He had to stand trial for smashing the windows of his ex-girlfriend's and his father's house, which he had done in a moment of rage of which he remembered little. He did remember that he became angry after a financial disagreement with his ex-girlfriend (IBen).

Rick (also not a traveller background) was bullied in primary and high school until he at one point "exploded" and beat his bully up, hitting him in the face without stopping, causing major injuries. He says that he has built a wall around him because of the bullying. He found the experience reassuring because now if someone bullies him to an extreme extent he knows that he would be able to use violence.

To be sure, being or acting tough should not only be seen as negative. It can stimulate self-esteem, and it might even be one of the few sources of self-esteem some of these participants have access to, or that is known to them. A tough pose can help you to defend yourself, either verbally, with your physical presence, with the tone of your voice, or ultimately physically, in case you need to defend yourself. In the project, these young people's toughness sometimes stood in the way of their finishing the course successfully or achieving other goals they had, and it caused harm to others as well. Some of the men used violence beyond self-defence, which was harmful for others (men and women), and some had traumatic experiences with violence in their past.

The observations presented in this section have shown how toughness, aggression, and violence play an important role in the project and in the lives of (some of) the participants. There were many incidents in which the young men, but also Cheryl, showed their toughness: as a posture to enforce a kind of respect or as a way to perform emotional hardness. The young traveller men also evinced a tendency to stand up for each other in tough ways when they felt one of them was attacked or disrespected. Participants' issues with men abusing women played in the background of the project, as well as the abuse of one of the male participants by his girlfriend. The trainers tried to get the participants' aggressive behaviour under control with interventions that showed respect for the men as individuals, but also for their traveller background. One trainer tried to connect with the men and at the same time tried to preserve his authority. Professionals and volunteers also tried to emphasize choices the young participants

had themselves. In a special training about conflict and aggression, the participants learned some skills to prevent aggression by recognizing boundaries in themselves and others, understanding where their anger came from, and making more conscious choices in their behaviour. These are skills that can be used to prevent violence towards men as well as women. The participants were in that sense normalized into more pacified citizens (or self-pacifying citizens, as it was their choice and desire to get more control over their aggressive behaviour). With Ben's reaction in mind, the new way of reflecting on one's own behaviour and having non-violent alternatives to respond in conflicts was also seen as enabling and as a liberation from hegemonic (masculine) norms.

Although the training was not officially about domestic violence, what the men learned can also be a way to change the men's (and a woman's) behaviour within their intimate relationships, as the participants can arguably use the lessons from this training in their private environment as well. Laura, however, did not speak explicitly about domestic violence, even though she knew it was a problem in the community. In a conversation after the training, she explained it could be a next step and that it would be good to have the other young men involved as well. An explicit conversation about domestic violence with this group, however, did not take place in the 2013 group.

Having established that the project was not explicitly about gender-based violence (only about violence as a cost of masculinity), the next section tackles the implicit and explicit ways the project practices addressed other forms of gender inequality. Using cooking classes and talking about prejudices, professionals tried to encourage more equality between men and women.

3.3.2 "I'm not a kitchen princess!" De-gendering cooking and other initiatives

Controlling aggression, as shown in the previous section, can be seen as an indirect way to impact gender equality. Susan claimed that she always had gender equality goals "in the back of her mind" and she had informal individual or small group conversations about the participants' intimate relationships. Another way in which gender equality goals were part of the program was in the Thursday-afternoon cooking classes. The classes were aimed at encouraging men to have a more active role in the household, and topics were discussed that concerned gender relations. Furthermore, in a training about communicating with children, prejudice about women was also one of the topics.

I will first discuss the way gender (in)equality was part of cooking classes and the training about prejudice, after which I will discuss how the project might have contributed to gender equality in indirect ways. I also reflect on what holds back the professionals from contributing to gender equality more.

Cooking classes and discussions about men's role in the household

The cooking class was presented to the participants as a social activity and a way to learn about healthy food. Health as a topic is related to sports and recreation: by learning about a healthy diet themselves, the participants could then teach children to live more healthy lives. According to

Susan, some of the participants had unhealthy diets and hardly cooked meals. Claudia offered the participants alternatives in her cooking class. She did not only take health into consideration, however, she also tried to adapt to what the participants would like to eat and put together affordable meals because the participants were on a budget. In order to do that, she let the group make traditional Dutch meals (mashed potatoes with kale and sausage), but also introduced them to something from her own Caribbean background by making a carrot-coconut soup spiced with ginger.

During the cooking activities, sometimes everyone participated in cutting or cooking the food, but there was also some struggle about who would do what, and the gender equality idea behind the cooking project did not always quite work out as planned. At one point, after Tinus encouraged me to join in, I started stirring in one of the pans. When it then turned out that I was the only one behind a stove (the rest was just hanging around in or outside the kitchen), I asked Kees to take over, pretending I had to go and set the table. He, however, refused – "No, I can't do that" – and without hesitation Cheryl took over. The same thing happened with doing the dishes and cleaning. Cheryl was very actively cleaning, and the men stepped back one by one and went outside to smoke (Rick, who is used to kitchen work, did stay in the kitchen to clean). Susan noticed this, but found it hard to encourage the men to participate in the cleaning for fear of more conflict in the group (O11-5). Obviously, at this point it would have been better to have a group with only men, so they would have to do everything themselves. Another solution would be to make the men and women aware of the stereotypical roles and try to reverse them. In this case, however, this might have led to some more conflict in the group.

At another moment, Claudia asked Tinus to help me set the table and he refused. When I asked him to put the (table-tennis) table in the right position because I could not do that on my own, he did agree to help. When we walked towards the main hall where we would have dinner later on, he shouted, "I am not a kitchen princess!", so everyone could hear; he was reaffirming that he did not intend to help me set the table and reclaiming his tough masculine image. After putting the table in the right position, he walked away, letting me arrange the tablecloth on my own (O11-5). Two weeks later, Ben and Kees did set the table themselves, however, even putting candles on the table like I had done (O11-8).

During the cooking classes, Susan planned discussions about the division of household tasks. To do this, Susan wrote claims on a flip chart that were meant to trigger discussion. One of these propositions was: "Men cannot cook". Rick already responded angrily when he had seen Susan preparing the flip chart in her office: "That's really a lousy claim. You cannot show up with a claim like that. I want you to take away that claim right now." Susan, however, carried on with her plan, revealing the sentence in the kitchen right before the group started preparing a meal. Tinus was the first to respond: "What is that? That's nonsense. If I see that, I want to kick that thing down immediately." Then he turned to Susan: "Is that really what you think?" He seemed to think that this was Susan's opinion, and Susan remained in her role, hoping for more responses: "I think that men really cannot cook". Cheryl named a few men who she knew could cook, also people in whose homes Susan had had dinner, for example one of Kees' cousins. Susan admitted that these men had cooking skills and looked at Rick, who cooked warm lunches at a neighbourhood centre: "And Rick of course, he can cook as well". Tinus at that point decided to take up the proposition as a challenge: "I really think it's nonsense; we will show them we can cook." He motivated the others to start cooking. (O11-5)

While the group was preparing the food, Susan tried to continue the conversation about household tasks. She casually asked about who does the dishes at home. Ben, who lives alone, explained he uses plastic cups and plates, so he doesn't have to do the dishes (R5). "A lot of us use plastic cups. That's quite normal to us", said Tinus, defending behaviour that outsiders to their community might find strange. Cheryl responded by suggesting to Kees that they should also buy plastic cups, as it would spare her from doing the dishes. Kees, however, coldly responded: "You just have to keep doing the dishes!". There was no reaction to this comment.

A week later, in the next cooking class, the claim Susan introduced for the discussion was: "Men can cook, but women are the ones who should cook". This time, Susan started the discussion during dinner.

Cheryl is the first one who responds: "No way. It's not like that. Men should cook just as well, but he [Kees] doesn't do it. Nothing at all, not in the household and he doesn't work either."

*Next to her, Kees takes his fork and makes a stabbing motion towards Cheryl. He pulls back his arm and says: "A woman should do the dishes and cook. Even if you [Cheryl] would work fulltime and I didn't, you would still have to do the dishes and cook, or to give me money for the snack bar: a woman's place is in the kitchen [*het enige recht van de vrouw is het aanrecht, *a well-known phrase that literally means: A woman's only right is that to the kitchen counter]. That's just the way it is." (O11-7)*

In these moments, Kees seemed to feel the need to counter Cheryl's public criticism with aggressive behaviour in order to not lose his tough image in front of his cousins and the other people present. In an interview, he claimed that he has never physically hurt her and does not want to hurt her because he experienced so much violence between his parents in his youth (IKees).

This time, Susan reacted by asking why he thinks the way he does. Kees responded that it has always been like that: "Because men had to work or do other stuff, and women had to stay at home and take care of the children." By referring to a past in which according to him roles were fixed, he did not leave room open for change. Susan at this point did not continue the discussion and carried on the conversation on another day with only Cheryl and Kees. Afterwards, she explained to me that in that conversation she tried to make clear that she does not want them to hurt each other (O11-7).

The cooking in itself could be a way for the men to see that some change in their roles at home was possible. Rick already cooked regularly in a neighbourhood centre and said he would not have trouble cooking or cleaning at home if he had a girlfriend (he lived with his mother). Ben saw it as something he would decide on with his partner, also depending on who has a job. He did not expect to find paid work in the future, however, because of his behavioural problems (ADHD), explaining that he would probably be the one had to do most of the household tasks if he would find a girlfriend with a job. In a regretful voice, he added: "It would turn out badly for me". At the end of the project, there were still no signs of Ben taking up cleaning tasks. When we visited him at home with the group, he still had plastic cups and plates. When Claudia asked

what he would do if he had a girlfriend, he explained he would buy plates and cups, because then she could do the dishes (O11-18).

Although the men might have picked up some cooking skills, and are perhaps a little more aware about the possibilities to divide tasks equally, it is unlikely that this part of the project made many changes in the lives of men and in the traveller community. Within the project, the classes did make the bonds between the participants stronger, although it at the same time offered a new arena for conflicts about how to cook and divide domestic tasks.

Talking about prejudice and other indirect ways to encourage gender equality

A training on communicating with children that was part of the program aimed to teach men negotiating communication skills with children and to have them reflect on prejudices.

Using exercises in which they had to explain to someone clearly what was expected of them, the participants learned to communicate with children in a clear way. They were also taught to be careful with physical contact and to respect boundaries. These can be seen as lessons they could use while parenting possible children their own.

The second part of the training was about prejudices and explicitly let the men talk about gender prejudice. The trainer, Brigit (a white woman, trained psychologist) showed them photographs of people and asked what the participants thought the profession of these people were. The photographs included men and women with various physical appearances, including different hair, skin colours, and clothing.

After showing a picture of a white woman with short hair, a light blue blouse, and flowers in the background, Brigit asks what we think of her and what profession she think she has.

Jan: A nice young woman.

[The others agree]

Tom: Something in care.

When Brigit reveals that she is a real-estate agent, the participants don't give a very visible response. The next photograph is a black man with a decorated brown and golden hat.

Tom: I really don't know, maybe he sells pears on the market? [some laughter in the group]

Tinus: I think he is a drug dealer, because that's what all black people do. No, just joking. No, I think he does something with sports, like I do. I think he is that kind of guy. (….)

Brigit: No, he is a teacher. [The participants respond with slight surprise.] (O11-10)

The answers from the group were slightly stereotypical: A woman is expected to be a nurse and a black man a drug dealer or something with sports. Moreover, Tinus identified with the black man for possibly being into sports. After a few examples, Tom pointed out that you never really know and should not be prejudiced (O11-10).

After a few more photos, Brigit concluded by saying that you sometimes have prejudiced ideas about people, but they are often not right. She then turned the conversations more explicitly towards the gender division of care tasks.

Brigit: What do you think about when people say a woman's place is in the kitchen?

Jan: I think so too.

Brigit: Do you have children?

Jan: Yes.

Brigit: Do you cook sometimes?

Jan: Yes.

Brigit: So then what you said earlier does not make sense. [O11-10]

This short interaction could have been the start of a longer conversation about gender (in)equality. Brigit could have let him elaborate on what he does and does not do in the household. She could have asked more about how he or others in the group see women, yet she only briefly addressed the topic. There could be a number of reasons why she did not carry on with the discussion. Firstly, it was not the official topic of the meeting: the meeting was presented to participants as being about communicating with children, making it difficult to start a conversation about gender prejudice. Secondly, because Jan's first reaction was somewhat provocative, Brigit stopped the discussion to prevent a negative atmosphere. Thirdly, she might have found it a matter that should not be discussed with these men because there is an implicit accusation in addressing the topic, which could increase stigmatization. Whatever the reason, she did not continue the discussion and told the group to have a short break, not returning to the topic after the break.

As I mentioned earlier, Susan tried to address gender issues, especially relationship issues, in informal conversations outside of the official courses and gatherings, so the cooking classes and the ("slipped in", brief) conversations about gender prejudices were not the only things that happened in the project with regard to gender equality. The youth centre provided a space to talk about problems with her, or with the volunteers. Informal conversations often led up to Susan helping participants, letting them reflect on certain issues, giving them advice, or intervening more actively. She helped Jan get back in touch with his children after he split up with his girlfriend, for example, by mediating an agreement with her so he could see his children regularly. Helping the participants have more control over their sometimes aggressive behaviour could also result in achieving more equal and less violent relationships between men and women, as well as between men.

The cooking class involved the men in a domestic activity, taught them about cooking, and could make the men more involved in household tasks, which might have a positive impact

on gender equality. However, what the men learned was limited because the classes were somewhat chaotic and what the men mostly did was help out in the kitchen rather than learn how to prepare a whole meal.

3.3.3 Case study 3 conclusion: observed impact on gender + equality

The main aim of the project in this case study, as articulated by the professionals, was to raise the self-confidence of young disadvantaged men from a white traveller community by involving them in a course to become a (sports and games) activity leader. The project also aimed to teach the young men how to cook and to address (gender) prejudices. The cooking classes were intended to encourage gender equality and a healthy diet. Although gender inequality and, more specifically, domestic violence were seen as problems in the traveller community, the project plan did not formulate a solution for these problems except for "raising the young men's self-esteem". During the project, the professional added a training that taught the men to handle aggression and prevent conflict, this to improve both the young men's lives and those of women around them and in that way contribute to gender equality.

The impact I observed on the participants' social locations was that the project offered the possibility for some of the young men and one young woman to do volunteer work they were interested in: they acquired a certificate that allowed them to be activity leaders and work with children. Five of the eight participants finished the program in the end. They had to do an exam, and their certificates were handed out by the local mayor in an official ceremony. Two others did remain involved in the project, but did not get their certificate, as they failed to finish parts of the program. The project also helped participants with individual problems ranging from housing, finances, and custody. Though gender inequality was discussed in the group as well as individually, especially in the group this happened in conflict-laden ways as some of the young men expressed unequal values, after which the discussion was often stopped.

The project visibly raised the confidence of some of the participants, which was clear from the way they were now able to speak in front of a group at the end of the project and the way they were able to organize activities. The project gave the participants the opportunity to express some of their worries individually to volunteers and professionals or within their group. Sometimes these worries concerned their negative collective identity, the way their traveller community was perceived.

The context of the participants' mixed white traveller and white working-class backgrounds resulted in specific local interventions that focussed on the problems these men experienced. The problems of some of the men in this case study were severe and complex, including poverty-related problems in their family, behavioural problems, domestic abuse, criminality, and low self-confidence. As this made it difficult to keep participants on board, sensitive topics were sometimes avoided in order to keep them participating. Interventions mainly aimed at regaining self-confidence of the men by teaching them to communicate in front of a group, while more sensitive topics were discussed one-on-one. As for the men who dropped out of the project, it is hard to say whether the project was enabling, since it could have had a disempowering effect due to their disappointment of not getting the certificate.

The main professional and volunteers in this project were highly involved, Susan because of her personal long-lasting relationship with the traveller community. Despite being attached to a large welfare organization, her personal involvement and the accessibility of the youth centre lowered the project's threshold for the participants. The small village environment of this project meant that most participants already knew each other and some were related. The volunteers lived close by, were easy to reach, and put a lot of effort in keeping the participants on board. Both they and the professional visited the participants at home, which made it easy to build a close connection, despite the hostility or mistrust that also existed among some in the traveller community. Although there were attempts to address gender (in)equality through discussions as well as in practical exercises, letting the men reflect on the topic proved hard to do. When the topic *was* addressed, it often led to conflict and the expression of values opposed to gender equality. This limited explicit attention can firstly be understood from the discrepancy between the project's backstage and frontstage goals, as there was a disconnection between being educated as an activity leader and the gender equality goals.

The "distraction" mechanism found in Case Study 1 also appears in this project: the young men have problems and goals of their own, which leads to professionals following those goals instead. Furthermore, there was a serious risk of conflict and of participants dropping out in this project. Because the group was small, quitting the program threatened the whole project. Therefore, similarly to in Case Study 1, there were attempts to keep interactions positive, not only to empower participants but also to keep them on board.

On top of that, because travellers have historically been stigmatized for deviant behaviour, discussing gender inequality with these men could contribute to the stigma, especially when it is a topic they did not choose themselves. The professional therefore protected the participants by avoiding sensitive topics. When sensitive issues were brought up, they were introduced implicitly and via other topics (or explicitly but unexpectedly during a cooking activity), until a participant reacted provocatively, which led to conflict and stopping the conversation.

The project can be seen as enabling, but also as normalizing. The young men and young woman were encouraged to discipline their aggressive behaviour. Just as in the previous case studies – and in even more apparent ways – the men were normalized to be more disciplined citizens, which made it easier to let them responsibly perform "useful" tasks and to prevent deviant behaviour. These practices resonate with neoliberal communitarian discourses in which citizens are encouraged to participate and not be dependent on welfare. At the same time, (some) participants longed for more control over their own behaviour because they felt their aggression got in their way. The way the intervention helped them reach this goal can be seen as enabling. Professionals saw the "culture" of travellers as problematic because of the "traditional values", including unequal gender values, which aligns with culturalist citizenship discourses that are usually applied to immigrants in the Netherlands (see Chapter 2). The professionals do show interest and some respect for the participants' backgrounds and culture, but still mostly highlight the fact that people have "choice" in behaviour, rejecting a more structural understanding of inequality recognizing the way travellers have disadvantaged possibilities and are being discriminated against.

3.4 COMPARING THREE CASES: PATTERNS, CONTEXTS, AND OBSERVED IMPACT

The three cases were studied to offer insights about the projects in their local contexts, to look for patterns in practices, and to study the impact of these contextualized practices on the participants' social locations, identities, and norms (RQ1c). Comparing them, I can show how the interventions' contextual differences led to variations in the projects' practices as well as their impacts. The observations also reveal similarities between projects despite their different contexts.

The projects' variations in context and their different ways of framing problems and solutions led to different choices for specific topics and activities. The differences in contexts concerned the participants' age group and family situations, the specific (disadvantaged) backgrounds of the participants and professionals, the type of organization, as well as whether the projects took place in an urban (Case Study 1), suburban (Case Study 2), or (relatively) rural setting (Case Study 3). The three case studies have shown that those contextual differences and different ways of understanding problems resulted in slightly different topics and practices.

In the first case study, the mixed bottom-up/top-down approach with a group of ethnically mixed older migrants resulted in topics such as migration history, discrimination, health, parenting, and volunteer work. There was also specific attention for age- and health-related problems. As a small organization, they depended on working together with other organizations that offered trainings, for instance on parenting. The urban setting led to a group in which men did not know each other in advance and felt they could speak freely. In the second case study, the group consisted of fathers who all had Moroccan backgrounds. They shared this background with the professionals involved, although there were also differences in class, religious conviction, educational background, and values concerning gender equality (two professionals identified as less conservatively Muslim than the participants, had a higher education and progressive gender equality values, which allowed them to perform bridging work). The participants' backgrounds as fathers resulted in a project that mainly, but not only, discussed fatherhood and parenting. The participants' and professionals' perceptions of trouble with neighbourhood youth led to participation in volunteer work that especially aimed to improve the situation of children and youth in the neighbourhood, for example street patrols and sports activities. Organized by a larger welfare organization, this project could hire external trainers to offer educational programs about parenting and was able to set up a program about "emancipation", which in this case meant improving the men's situation as well as those of their partner and children. In the suburban setting of the second case study, most men already knew each other before the project, which created familiarity but also made it difficult for some to speak openly about personal issues. In the third case study, the participants were young men (and one woman) with a stigmatized white traveller background and other working-class (white) young men. In this case study, the main organizer, a young white middle-class female professional who worked for a welfare organization and had an established though fragile relationship with traveller families organized a sports and recreation leadership training in order to help the young participants develop more self-esteem. She combined these activities with cooking classes in order to get the men more involved in household tasks. The parallel program was meant to combine activities with discussions, the latter of which were expected to be less appealing to men. Because it turned out that aggression played an important role in the lives of

many participants, an aggression- and conflict-handling training was organized, tackling the way they behaved in conflicts, in their daily lives, and for some in experiences with domestic violence. The participants also received a training on communicating with children that included a lesson about prejudices. In this relatively rural project, half of the participants were members of a highly stigmatized white traveller family. Some of the other participants were close to the traveller participants, while others had more distant relationships. Despite the familiarity, there was a lot of conflict within the project, though some of the participants did speak openly about their personal issues.

In the three case studies, the "participation" and "emancipation" goals (see Chapter 2) were transformed into specific topics and activities depending on what were considered the specific disadvantaged group's problems, interests, and capabilities. However, more remarkable than the projects' differences are their similarities in themes on a broader level. In their own ways all three case studies aimed to: repair/recalibrate disadvantaged "outsider" citizens' relationships with society (employers and state); discuss discrimination and stigma; discipline aggression; and encourage gender equality (which happened in very limited ways). The ways these topics were discussed resulted in different kinds of impacts on gender+ equality. I will here discuss the ways the three projects handled these broader themes, after which I will discuss which impact their practices had on social locations, identities/emotions, and norms, and whether this impact was normalizing, enabling, or otherwise.

Repairing/recalibrating disadvantaged "outsider" citizens' relationships with society

All three cases included "repairing" or "recalibrating" practices that were aimed to improve participants' relationship with (Dutch) society, the labour market, and (state) institutions.

In Case 1, the participants were encouraged to discuss their migration histories, this from the assumption that the men needed to speak about their backgrounds, and especially negative experiences, in order to transform their frustrations into more positive narratives on migration and thus develop a more positive attitude towards Dutch society. In that sense, the project was an outlet for frustration as well as a consolidating practice, meaning that negative experiences were heard and taken into account, though without doing something about these negative experiences. According to the professionals, the more positive attitude was needed to get the men to start doing volunteer work. Though these cases concerned seniors and sometimes men who had been unemployed for a long time, the idea was that these men could and should still be encouraged to do volunteer work.

The second case study used similar "repairing" or "recalibrating" practices, as the men were also encouraged to talk about their experiences to subsequently let them reflect on what they wanted to do to improve their situations, starting from their own "square meter". This led the men to volunteer in activities for children and youth in their neighbourhood and to participate in street patrols to keep youth in check. Eventually, these practices also led to a group of participants taking up the role of community representatives (as "Moroccan fathers"). They were regularly asked to liaise or consult with local institutions like the municipality, schools, or the police. This way, the men were put in a position in which they were responsible for policing others in the community (through street patrols), but they were also given a voice as

representatives, making it possible to voice issues from the local community with local institutions.

In the third case study, the young men with traveller backgrounds experienced rejection and discrimination in their daily lives. Their relationships with society were recalibrated through activities in which they learned to be activity leaders (in sports and games). During the meetings, the participants were taught how to present themselves in front of a group and to lead activities with children. These practices can also be seen as a way of "repairing" or constructing a positive relationship with society in order to let these people participate in "useful" activities. These initiatives, however, did not "repair" the discrimination they experienced.

All these practices made it possible for the men to participate in activities and learn some skills, thereby improving their (class and ethnic) social locations, if in limited ways. Most impacted were their individual identities and emotions, as projects let the men express frustration and offered them consolidation and a sense of belonging; the projects offered them spaces and interactions in which their negative experiences were listened to, though nothing was done to address the structural backgrounds of these negative experiences. The practices pushed men to conform to the norm of being active citizens, which subjected them to dominant neoliberal discourses. The aim to involve men in volunteer work also fits those dominant neoliberal communitarian discourses in which citizens are expected to fulfil useful roles and take up "responsibility" in caring for each other. In the project practices, professionals emphasized the benefits volunteer work had for the men themselves, encouraging men to do something they liked, rather than calling on their "responsibility". The men, furthermore, were taught to act in less aggressive ways and encouraged to develop more pacified masculinities (van Huis & van der Haar 2015). Any critical voices from participants were only listened to in order release their frustration, not to make, suggest, or discuss structural changes, after which more positive attitudes were expected.

The three cases were enabling in limited ways, as the men were not encouraged to further reflect on structural inequalities. Discussing inequalities did not go beyond consolidating practices, and there were no reflections on more structural solutions for inequalities. Being given the opportunity to represent one's community, as in Case Study 2, can be seen as a way to improve structural inequalities, but this role was mainly aimed at conforming immigrant youth. This shows there was a clear de-politicization of social issues.

The next two sections about how discrimination and disciplining aggression featured in the projects. These two issues can be seen as part of the interventions' repairing and recalibrating missions, because talking about discrimination was partly done in order to help participants release their frustrations and form a more positive attitude towards the Dutch majority (in Case 1), and because controlling aggression can also be a way to transform into more useful and normalized citizens. However, as there is more to these issues than just that I will therefore discuss them separately.

Dealing with discrimination and stigma

In all three projects, discrimination was a topic of discussion, if in different ways. All three mainly framed discrimination as ethnic or cultural discrimination, as is most common in the Netherlands (as explained in 2.3.2). Only in the third case study was discrimination discussed in

its form of prejudices against women, though briefly and without the participants' personal reflections.

In the first case study, professionals encouraged the men to talk about their experiences with discrimination, but only to then get them to move on from them, explaining that you will get ahead if you try your best and think positively. Offering the men space to talk about discrimination could have been enabling and empowering if strategies had been offered to do something about the unjust situation. However, the men were mainly told to question whether they really had been discriminated against and encouraged not to become angry when they did experience discrimination. This strategy assumed that the men often unjustly perceived they were being discriminated against, and was aimed to make them feel less rejected. These practices can be seen as pacifying and emotionally disempowering, as the main advice they got was to not respond when facing discrimination .

In the second case study, inspired by their own personal experiences with stigmatization as persons with Moroccan backgrounds in the Netherlands, the professionals tried to empower participants to improve their neighbourhood while at the same time reassuring them that they should not feel responsible for the stigmatization of all (post)immigrants with Moroccan backgrounds. This way the professionals wanted to adjust the participants' identities to be stronger and more self-aware. Some of the men themselves wanted to show white Dutch people that they did not deserve their negative stigma by showing they were "good citizens" and by improving their neighbourhood (by self-induced change towards normalization, or normification, in Goffmann's terms (1963/2009). The professionals helped the men perform these "good citizen" roles, but also emphasized that they did not need to feel responsible for the existing stigma, thereby combining responsibilitizing and de-responsibilitizing as an counter-narrative. This can be seen as an enabling, empowering and liberating strategy: they offered the men possibilities to improve their situation, but encouraged them to not feel unjustly responsible for the actions of others.

In the third case study, the social workers and volunteers treated the participants' problems mainly as resulting from their individual choices. In their everyday work, the professionals showed a respectful involvement in the travellers' lives and community. They showed interest in their backgrounds and took their problems seriously, which can be seen as enabling practices in a local environment where they are generally rejected and excluded. Yet in a training about prejudice, the professional only questioned the participants' own prejudices about other ethnicities and about women (very briefly). In contrast to the other two case studies, participants were not involved in a group discussion about how they themselves faced discrimination.

The way discrimination was discussed in the first case study strongly resonates with the dominant Dutch discourse which often trivializes discrimination and racism. This is especially the case for subtle forms of racism, which get depicted as expressions of a victim mentality. People are thus held responsible for their own misfortunes first, and structural (class and ethnic) inequalities are hardly ever considered (see also 2.3.2). The second case study offered a counter-narrative that helped a stigmatized group wanting to improve themselves and their neighbourhoods. It also acknowledged structurally unequal locations and offered limits to what the men should feel responsible for. In Case 3, the discrimination of the traveller family was hardly discussed.

Discrimination was discussed in terms of identifications and emotions, especially in the first case study, with the aim of improving these men's sense of belonging in order to "repair/recalibrate" them and let them "participate". This way of discussing discrimination contrasted with how (some) participants saw discrimination as not only the way they perceived themselves as disadvantaged to others, but also as the way they were constrained compared to a white privileged majority (with discrimination therefore having concrete consequences for their social locations).

The case studies show how the projects empowered and enabled men, but also conformed them. Sometimes conforming to existing norms is part of the empowerment process as they gain power or opportunities to control their own lives within existing structures and discourses. When these structures continue to be oppressing, however, it can be disempowering to encourage participants to conform. Combining different strategies and discourses, such as responsibilization and de-responsibilization (Case Study 2), could be a way to overcome these seemingly conflicting aims, by organising an intervention that is not just pacifying in constraining ways, but that constructs enabled, liberated masculinities.

Disciplining aggression: in parenting, towards women, in city streets, and among men

In all three case studies, disciplining aggression was a theme, but with different accents. In the first two cases, professionals discouraged authoritarian ways of disciplining children, including the use of physical violence, and encouraged positive reinforcement and negotiation instead. This discouragement of authoritarian and aggressive ways of communicating was then stretched from children to also include partners by "slipping in" topics like "How to solve conflicts with partners" in meetings about parenting. These interactions showed that the professionals encouraged negotiating and equal ways of communicating between men and women. In the second case study, there were furthermore practices, such as street patrols, that were aimed at disciplining violence in the neighbourhood streets.

In the third case study – the project for young white working-class (traveller) men – aggression and violence played an even more important role. In project practices, the men showed tough attitudes and sometimes threatened with violence. Aggression and violence, moreover, turned out to play important roles in the participants' lives, including incidents of domestic violence. In the project, the men were encouraged to gain more control over their aggressive behaviour, for example in a two-day training. The meetings, however, were not framed as being about domestic violence, but about aggression in general. The professionals in this project knew that some men in the community acted violently towards women, while in the other projects the incidence of domestic violence was unknown (if in some cases suspected). Still, the professionals handled the problem with great care, seemingly uneasy to openly discuss gender issues, including gender-based violence.

Disciplining aggression and encouraging alternative strategies were ways in which the project practices broadened the men's possibilities for behaving in situations of conflict, which can be seen as enabling for men as well as for those who are close to these men, including women. This encouragement of not using violence was accompanied with the promotion of more peaceful ways of conflict resolution and therefore more peaceful masculinities. More

critically, addressing disadvantaged men as potentially violent can also be seen as an articulation of gendered culturalist discourse: men with a backgrounds from outside the Netherlands or men with an outsider position within the Netherlands are assumed to be culturally deviant and more aggressive than non-minoritized citizens. This was especially problematic in cases when professionals did not assess whether there really was such an aggression problem. It did not always become clear to what extent men acted aggressively in their daily lives because professionals kept "tiptoeing" around the topic. Only in the third case study was there prior knowledge of the role of aggression in some of the young men's lives and therefore reason to explicitly talk about aggression and conflict. In the other two projects, this was done in more covert and limited ways.

Fading of gender equality as a topic and addressing it by slipping it in or tiptoeing around it

All three projects, in various ways, aimed to improve gender equality. In the first case study, "improving gender relations and the position of women and children" was a goal; in the second case study "creating awareness of the roles of fathers in the family" and "breaking through gender roles" were articulated aims; and the third case study highlighted a problem with "traditional values" and noted there was "a risk of domestic violence". In the last case study, the project plan did not include a goal to improve gender equality, but it did aim to discuss prejudices against women and to organize cooking classes.

The case studies showed that it proved difficult to discuss gender equality openly, and as gender equality goals received limited attention they faded between the projects' plans and their practices. There were six mechanisms at work here:

Firstly, other goals and issues caused a *distraction mechanism* that moved projects away from gender equality issues. These issues concerned the men's experiences with marginalization. The (assumed) privileged dimensions of inequality thus received less attention than its disadvantaged dimensions, especially as projects worked in a bottom-up way and because professionals tried to connect with the men they were working with, therefore focussing on issues the men experienced.

Secondly, a *positive atmosphere mechanism* can be identified in the way professionals tried to make participants feel welcome and empower them emotionally, which conflicted with conversations about possible subordinating ("hampering") practices, or matters that might be seen as private. This was especially visible in the first case study, where participants' attempts to talk about problems at home were not picked up in order to maintain a positive atmosphere. The second case study showed that a positive atmosphere could be created despite such "confrontational" ways of communicating, especially due to one of the volunteers/semi-professionals who tried to get beyond socially desirable answers by encouraging the men to be honest. Still, despite his attempts, conversations never got very personal, which one of the professionals sees as a result of religious conservatism or even a specific competitive form of pious macho behaviour. It also had to do with fear of gossip in a suburban neighbourhood community in which participants knew each other. In the third case study, the professional tried to discuss topics like the division of household tasks. More sensitive topics like domestic violence were avoided in collective discussions, in order to keep the atmosphere positive or at least prevent conflict or participants walking away.

These first two mechanisms can be found in Case Study 1, but are also present in Cases 2 and 3). A third, *protection mechanism* is due to the professionals' unwillingness to place "blame" on men who are already disadvantaged and stigmatized (found in Case Study 3). Assuming these men mistreat women, for instance, is a generalization that could contribute to the stigma. The combination of not knowing whether violence really occurred and not wanting to further harm the men they worked with seemed to stop professionals from addressing the topic. This protection mechanism also prevented gender from being discussed in known cases on domestic violence was known to occur, as it was a highly sensitive topic. Professionals were thus "protecting" the men they worked with (from blame), not the battered women and children who were more distant from them in this project.

The fourth mechanism was due to a *discrepancy between projects' backstage and frontstage goals* (found most strongly in Case Study 3). As gender equality was never explicitly articulated as a goal from the start**,** this made it difficult to communicate gender equality topics later on, because it did not fit the overall goals that were communicated to participants at the start of the project. Goffman (1978) identified backstage behaviour as what we do outside of the public eye, including the way people prepare to enter public space (for example by changing their facial expression and posture). In reference to these projects this means that backstage goals are what professionals articulated as goals amongst themselves, in contrast to what they say to participants "frontstage". These three case studies had been strong discrepancy between the two, because gender equality and "male emancipation" were seen as unappealing topics (and goals) for men (I8; I11; I18) so the professionals planned to introduce them later on, to implicitly address them, or discuss these issues one on one. The backstage-frontstage discrepancy made it difficult to introduce the topic openly in the project.

The fifth mechanism is due to the fact that professionals sometimes took an *easy way out when aiming for a goal that has multiple meanings*. In Chapter 2, I have shown that male emancipation as a goal not only concerns gender equality. Besides gender equality, the three projects also saw male emancipation as the advancement of the men themselves. And even though all three case studies had formulated gender inequality as a problem, the multiple meaning of male emancipation led to a perception of having fulfilled the emancipation goal after advancing the lives of men themselves.

The sixth mechanism at work in these three cases was *the lack of experience, methods, and specialized professionals* to overcome these obstacles and discuss gender issues with men. As engaging men in gender equality was new to the professionals, they were therefore still looking for ways to address topics over the course of my fieldwork.

Studying the projects more closely, some gender equality practices did appear, though the issues turned out to be mostly slipped in verbally or through embodied practices like the cooking classes. Furthermore, professionals often tiptoed around gender equality. In the meetings about parenting, communicating with children (Case Studies 1–3), and mental health (in Case Study 1), professionals gave examples of how to have constructive conversations with children and stretched the topic to include women by giving personal examples of how they solved conflicts with their partner. The professionals also encouraged men to negotiate with their partner about parenting, which not only would mean children would not get conflicting rules or advice from both parents, but it also encouraged negotiating relationships that therefore would perhaps be more equal. Gender equality was also "slipped in" by organizing cooking classes (Case Study 3)

which, though communicated to advocate healthy food, were (also) meant to get men more involved in household tasks. During the cooking classes, the professional offered claims for discussion, a verbal strategy that, while explicit, proved unsuccessful at triggering a productive discussion. As the participants did not expect this to be part of the program, the discussions became quite polarized, and the men took up conservative positions defending inequality, which were then not challenged further.

Disciplining aggression, although not introduced as a gender equality topic, can also be seen as a way to encourage gender equality: firstly because disciplining aggression discourages violence towards women, and secondly because less violent behaviour also decreases violence against men (and lowers the cost of masculinity) (Messner 2000). The interventions addressing aggression offered the men different ways to be men and handle conflict in different, less aggressive ways (with the assumption that they previously practiced an aggressive hegemonic masculinity). Whether the men in these projects had previously exhibited aggressive behaviour towards women was not assessed by the professionals in advance. Only in the third case study did it become clear that there were issues with aggression in lives of some of the participants, including against (ex-)partners.

The practices aimed at gender equality naturally resonate with feminist discourses, especially those in the Netherlands that have longer articulated "traditional values" of men as problematic and aimed to involve men in gender equality more. The case studies moreover resonate with culturalist discourses which argue that migrants' (and other minoritized) cultures need to be changed to more gender equal ones in order for them to become true Dutch citizens (see also Chapter 2), thus assuming that gender equality is part of Dutch culture.

The practices that were aimed at gender equality enabled as well as normalized men, and potentially enabled women. Disciplining violence is a normalizing practice that can be enabling if men are offered more peaceful ways to communicate (with partners). The alternative conflict-resolution strategies that that were offered can be seen as enabling, especially for those who would otherwise likely be harmed by violence. The alternative practices can moreover be seen as liberating the men from hegemonic masculinity. The third case study also aimed to make changes to the division of household and care work. The men in the group, however, kept expressing unequal attitudes on these issues. Both the second and third case study have shown that merely talking about gender issues with a group of men will not automatically lead to the expression of gender equality values. Men in these two groups expressed their gender-unequal values and at times even created an atmosphere in which expressing values in favour of inequality were socially most desirable and offered masculine status. In these groups, it was important that professionals offered a counter-narrative by showing women's perspectives when the men only expressed their own. Professionals did not always take up that challenge after participants uttered unequal views, however, they did to some extent in Case Study 2, but in Case Study 3 they hardly succeeded.

Impact on social locations, identities, and norms: The unwanted effects of dominant discourses and counter-narratives

The observed impact of the project practices included improving individual social locations by providing individual help and information, and helping to solve problems (financial problems, problems with housing, legal issues, conflicts with neighbours). Some men in the first case study started participating in Dutch language courses and some in computer courses, allowing them to

improve their communication skills and access to information. Men in all three cases started to do volunteer work. In the third case study, the young men learned to speak with more confidence in public and they learned to organize activities for children, for which most of the participants received an official certificate at the end of the program, offering them better credentials to find a paid job. The men in the first two case studies talked about parenting and reflected on the importance of being involved in the lives of their children. They were encouraged to be less strict, less aggressive, and more negotiating in their parenting, offering children more room to develop themselves in a safe environment with the support of both parents. To control anger and be more negotiating was also advice that was given with regards to communication with spouses, which could be seen as a way to positively impact gender equality. The men also reflected on the different ways they raised sons and daughters. The young men in the third case study learned some cooking skills as well as alternative ways to deal with conflict and prevent aggressive behaviour. All these skills and ways of including men in new practices offered participants new possibilities and in that way improved their individual social locations. However, this impact on social locations was mostly individual and not structural. Furthermore, the men's privileges were hardly addressed, and professionals had difficulty addressing gender-unequal practices because of the mechanisms that made gender equality fade as a topic. These fading mechanisms were grounded in the participants' disadvantages and the way professionals responded to them: professionals wanted to improve the men's disadvantaged positions, empower them through creating a positive atmosphere, and prevent any further stigmatization. A lack of methods and the fact that backstage goals that were not articulated frontstage also made it hard to address gender equality.

As far as the projects' impact on identities and emotions, I noticed that participants were encouraged to let go of any frustration about negative experiences with employers and discrimination. They were encouraged to form a more positive narrative about their migration and work histories, and their position in society as stigmatized people, in order to feel better about themselves and gain (unpaid) employent. These practices can be understood as empowering in the sense of providing positive feelings and more self-esteem, but they did not help them resist structural inequalities. In the second case, professionals encouraged a stronger sense of resistance against stigma through a combined responsibilization and de-responsibilization strategy: the professionals encouraged the men to be actively involved in improving the neighbourhood, but also to not feel responsible for their negative reputation as an ethnic group. The men furthermore became "spokespeople" for the community in their neighbourhood, which is a form of politicization and structurally improved their social locations (but mostly aimed at disciplining youth). None of the projects, however, had an impact that could be characterised as a conscious engagement in gender equality; As the issues that were raised concerning gender equality were addressed in such limited ways, there was no identification with the cause of gender equality and no politicization of this issue.

As far as impact on norms, in all three case studies the norm of "participation" or "active citizenship" was central. The "participation" norm can be seen as part of a neoliberal discourse in which citizens are expected to be active, "useful", and "responsible". The communitarian version of this neoliberal discourse promotes volunteer work through which men are led to take part in "helping others" and do work which would previously have been done by a publicly funded welfare system. Encouraging participation can be seen as normalizing within a neoliberal

communitarian society in which citizens are expected to be responsible for contributing to either the economy or the care for others in order to lower the government's welfare expenses. The projects all encourage participants to conform to these norms. The neoliberal discourse's emphasis on individual change led the professionals to emphasise individual empowerment and feelings of belonging, while structural inequalities were ignored. This emphasis on the individual and on participation can therefore be understood as due to the embeddedness of the interventions within dominant neoliberal discourses. The focus on *feelings* of discrimination over actual experiences of discrimination strongly resonates with the dominant Dutch discrimination discourses in which experiences with discrimination are predominantly trivialized (Essed & Hoving 2014; Wekker 2016; see also 2.3). Similarly, the fading of gender equality in all three case studies when comparing the projects' articulated aims to their practices also shows how structural inequalities are framed as individual problems. Furthermore, by paying little to no attention to gender inequality, the dominant norm that says that men are not interested in improving the lives of women is reproduced, which shows an unintended impact of hegemonic masculinity on the projects by their assumption and reproduction of non-compassionate masculinities.

More critical and creative ways of addressing problems were also present, however. Professionals looked for volunteer work the participants were passionate about and helped them connect with organizations in which they potentially could do such work. The men were thus not pushed to do "volunteer" work against their own will, which also happens in the Netherlands (Kampen 2014).[44] In the second case study, I encountered a counter-narrative concerning discrimination and stigma in which discrimination was acknowledged and professionals tried to prevent men from feeling stigmatized by de-responsibilizing them from any negative behaviour exhibited by people from the same ethnic background. These practices produced more possibilities to improve the men's own situation, without holding them responsible for what they had no power over, and in that sense stimulated more empowered and liberated masculinities

Altogether, the case studies show how dominant discourses interfered with the aims the professionals had formulated. The professionals not only reproduced these discourses (in their framing of target groups, problems, and solutions), but the discourses also appeared in their practices, which limited their impact on gender+ equality. The three projects did not manage to improve women's social locations by involving men in gender equality issues, nor did they help men identify with such a cause or address gender norms through interventions (with a few exceptions: to be less aggressive and to – reflect on – raising sons and daughters more equally). The "social isolation"–"participation" nexus that was found in the project plans was therefore much more emphasized than the "traditional values and behaviour"–"emancipation" nexus (see Chapter 2). Even though professionals had highlighted gender-inequality problems and articulated gender equality goals, these aims faded in their projects' practices.

The impact that participants experienced will be discussed in Chapter 5. In the next chapter consisting of a participant-observation study of 19 more projects, I will first show how other projects addressed this difficulty to work on gender+ equality goals.

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[44] In his research, Kampen shows how people in the Netherlands who receive benefits are urged to do volunteer work and punished with cuts on their benefits if they do not "participate". The assumption is that experience with "volunteer" work will make it easier to get paid work, which proves to be hardly the case (2014).

CHAPTER 4

OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES TO INVOLVE MEN IN GENDER+ EQUALITY: 19 MORE CASE STUDIES

In the previous chapters, we have seen that the professionals organizing these projects for disadvantaged men experienced difficulties in achieving their aim of involving these men in gender equality issues. In Chapter 2, I showed that as professionals expected the gender equality goal to be problematic, especially where it concerned men, they planned to hide it, at least at first. At the start of the project most professionals did not have strategies or methods in place to address gender equality, in contrast to their "participation" goals. In Chapter 3's case studies, I have shown that the projects' practices mostly concerned empowering participants, guiding them to become active, to do volunteer work, and to involve them in parenting. In the few instances when gender equality was addressed in the three case studies, it was done by "tiptoeing around" the topic and by "slipping in" gender equality in meetings about other topics.

In this chapter, I have included 19 more projects in the analysis to learn more about how gender equality was addressed and which impact the different strategies had. I include the way professionals and participants talked about gender equality topics and the way the images and embodied practices they used aimed to improve gender equality. After I present my analysis, I will show in which ways these efforts impacted on gender+ equality, including the particpants' social locations, identities, and norms, and how these can be valued as normalizing, enabling, or otherwise. First, I will discuss how participants themselves addressed gender equality unprompted to highlight that this topic was not only addressed top-down by professionals, but also resonated with at least some of the participants.

4.1 PARTICIPANTS' UNPROMPTED INITIATIVES TO TALK ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY TOPICS

In the first case study, I showed that there were men who wanted to talk about topics related to gender relations. There was Rachid, who said that: "The women (...) become stressed because of the men" and requested a trainer to talk about the topic; there was Fouad, who wanted to talk about "problems in the family, in the houses"; and there was Jamal, who protested against women being restricted to wear veils or headscarves by employers or by law.

Rachid's suggestion was answered by a professional explaining to the group that equality within relationships would help spouses understand support each other better. The professionals responded to Fouad's suggestion with a plan to discuss parenting (though Fouad did not have children and had problems with his wife). A professional responded to Jamal's protesting about

veil restrictions by highlighting that veiling should be the choice of women themselves. The initiatives of the participants show that there were men interested in gender equality issues, which could have been a reason for further discussions about the topic. The professionals' responses, however, were brief and were not taken as an incentive to let participants talk more about how they saw gender inequality as a problem.

In the 19 other projects, I saw few participants take the initiative to talk about gender equality issues. When I did, they were mostly fathers who started conversations about parenting, including how they stood up for their daughters' future and education. In a project about fatherhood with participants with Turkish backgrounds, several men were talking about their children's education (the central topic of the discussion was discrimination). One man spoke about his daughter's trouble to get a place as an intern. Though she had written 18 letters, the only response she got were two rejections. The father said that he was afraid that she was being discriminated against because of her Turkish name and background. In the same group, a man spoke about how he stood up for his daughter because her school had two separate classes: one with "foreign" children and one with "Dutch" children. He wanted his daughter to be in the Dutch class because her friends were, and because he wanted "what's best for his daughter". In the end he moved her to another school. A third man explained how he protested against his daughter's school because his daughter got a low score on a vocabulary test and consequently was advised a lower form of secondary education. After he persisted, the school checked her answers, and it turned out that her scores were higher. He explained: "You have to stand up for your rights. It's about your daughter. It's about her future." He urged the other fathers to pay attention to these school advices, because teachers assume that "foreign" pupils are not as smart.

These initiatives offer a contrast to the idea that migrant/Muslim fathers would hamper the future of their daughters, which was how professionals framed the problems they aimed to solve with their projects (as explained in Chapter 2). The examples show that there are men in these groups who care about the wellbeing and (school) careers of their daughters, which presents professionals with an opportunity to link up with these fathers' feminist positions about their daughters. The examples also show that it was not just professionals who initiated conversations about gender equality, and that there were participants for whom their daughters' futures and (school) careers were self-evidently important, which is a contrast to the examples in the following section, which shows how the topic was guided top-down by professionals.

4.2 Strategies for involving men in gender equality: gender backstage and frontstage, embodied practices, de-essentializing stories

Though addressing gender equality was part of the male-emancipation projects, it did not have the central role.[45] In order to learn from those projects that did address gender equality, I have

[45] Of the 49 participant observations that were conducted additional to the observations in the three case studies (49 visits in 19 projects), there were 12 observations (in 11 projects) in which professionals talked with participants about gender inequality or gender difference (O1-3; O2-1; O4-2; O5-4; O12-3; O15-2; O16; O20-1; O20-4; O21; O22-2; O23-1). There were 9 observations in which gender equality was "addressed" through spaces or embodied practices, such as cooking classes or father/child activities, without necessarily talking about gender equality (O5-1;

formulated a typology of strategies projects used to address gender equality: strategies professionals used to hide or communicate gender equality goals from participants; strategies by which professionals "embodied" and materialized the topic; and strategies by which professionals de-essentialized gender (in)equality by placing the topic in a historical context, by telling personal stories, or by hiring gender experts.

4.2.1 Gender backstage and frontstage: balancing, hiding, communicating, and masculinizing gender equality goals

In order to involve men in gender equality issues, professionals gave gender equality specific places in their backstage and frontstage framing. By backstage goals, I here mean goals that professionals formulated in the absence of their project's participants, for example in project plans, in communication with each other, or in interviews. By frontstage goals, I mean the goals that professionals communicated to participants. Though back- and frontstage sometimes overlapped, they often showed discrepancies. The backstage-frontstage dramaturgical perspective (Goffman 1978) can help understand how hiding goals impacted on the projects' practices. I will here discuss three strategies (S1-S3) professionals used that involve the place of gender equality goals in the project with those of their other goals.

S1: Combining and balancing gender equality goals with other goals

Projects had other goals besides gender equality: empowering disadvantaged unemployed men and helping or encouraging participants to "participate" in volunteer or paid work (see also Chapter 2). In communication with (potential) participants, the "participation" goals were used to convince men to join the project, while gender equality goals were not mentioned and only introduced later on (if at all). Combining gender equality goals with other goals can be seen as a way in which professionals tried to convince men to participate in such a project in the first place, while only addressing gender equality might attract fewer men. To keep gender equality an important goal, professionals had to actively look for a balance in the way they combined "participation goals" with gender equality goals.

S2: Via other topics: parenting as a stepping stone to addressing gender equality

Combining goals was not the only strategy by which professionals involved men in projects that they might be interested in. "Participation goals" and "involvement in parenting" goals also allowed the professionals to bring up ("slip in") gender equality through other topics. Parenting especially provided an opportunity to talk about gender equality. In this way backstage goals were carefully introduced frontstage without making it explicit that it was one of the main aims of the project.

O5-2; O6-2; O14-1; O14-2; O22-3; O4-3; O20-1; O22-2). In two of these observations, there were both embodied practices aimed at gender equality as well as conversations about gender equality (O20-1; O22-2). If these practices are taken into consideration, 19 observations (of 49) at 13 projects can be labelled as observations in which gender equality or gender difference was addressed with target groups.

In a meeting about parenting teens, one professional started a conversation about the role of men and women in parenting. The project was attended by young men from the neighbourhood and participants with Cape Verdean backgrounds, including some women. There were also male and female professionals present who participated in the discussions, including a male schoolteacher from a school involved in the project.[46] The female trainer (Cape Verdean background) was from an emancipation organization that emerged from several migrant women's organizations.

The female trainer introduces a PowerPoint slide that says: "What do you do when your 12-year-old daughter comes to you and says: 'Daddy, I'm in love.'"

A (a man, Cape Verdean background): "I will give her a good dressing down!"

B (a woman, Cape Verdean background) reacts surprised: "I thought you were modern?"

A: "She doesn't even know herself, let alone what love is!"

C (man, Cape Verdean background): [talks about his daughter, who asked him for contraceptives and, a few years later, to buy diapers for her] "I think she wanted me to open up. I was very closed off."

D (a white Dutch schoolteacher): "It's important to create an open atmosphere and to talk." (O21-1)

The quote shows how the trainer turns a meeting about raising children in general into a conversation about the relationship of a father with his teenage daughter, with a prepared prompt to steer the conversation in that direction. The reaction of one man, which is to restrict his daughter, triggers a critical reaction from a woman, who shows her disappointment and criticises him for not being more "modern". For another man, the proposition triggers a memory. Perhaps it was a provocative way for the daughter to say that she was having sex or a way to break through some gender boundaries, but he perceived it as unusual, something he remembered as a signifying moment in his relationship with his daughter. The schoolteacher emphasized the need to talk openly. The advice to talk with children was given throughout the whole meeting and in many other observations.

Another prompt also addressed a gender equality topic, in this case how fathers and mothers divide tasks, specifically the involvement in the children's school.

The PowerPoint says: "I leave involvement in school issues to the mother and to the school"

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[46] In this meeting, the professionals from a women's organization allowed interested women to participate, even though the topic was fatherhood. In the meeting, the professionals specifically addressed the men. The professionals also invited other professionals (men and women) who they planned to work with in the future: professionals from a school, a social-work organizations, and an organization that worked with men.

A (man, Cape Verdean background): "Until the sixth grade, the mother can do that on her own. The mother is simply more involved with the children".

D (white male teacher): "I do go to parent-teacher meetings, and my wife doesn't. She brings the children to school."

E (young man, background unknown): It's good to be in contact with children before puberty, that way they will do less things they are not allowed to during puberty.

F (a middle-aged man, background unknown): I think it is very important. The children feel supported. I take the same position as the mother. That's not only because she [the daughter] would take advantage of the difference, she also has to be able to rely on [our?] choices. We have to talk, keep talking and listening". (O21-1)

In this quote, the trainer uses a prompt to guide the conversation to a discussion about the division of a parenting task between men and women: the involvement with the children's school.

In this project, it was not the trainer who "corrected" or questioned norms that were not seen as gender equal, this was mostly done by other (white "Dutch" and/or female) participants. With almost every problem the men talked about, someone replied that parents should talk with their children to come to a solution. Moreover, they advised parents to talk to each other to come to a solution: "You have to talk with each other, the parents, you have to agree with each other and level with each other."

By encouraging men to talk with their children and partners, and to be involved in parenting from an early age, they were stimulated to perform tasks that could be enabling for women. Talking and creating stronger bonds with children can also be seen as limiting the cost of masculinity, as one of the costs of being a man is having weaker emotional bonds with one's children. The wellbeing of children and looking for (appropriate) ways of disciplining children by involving fathers was presented as the main goal (frontstage), while gender equality was addressed implicitly.

Compared to other meetings about parenting, this project especially stirred conversations about gender equality issues. This was because the organization originated from several migrant women's organizations and has "emancipation" (here meaning gender equality) as its main goal, making gender equality a more self-evident topic in their meetings. The trainer was clearly prepared to direct the conversations towards gender with the help of prompts and questions.

Implicitly bringing up gender equality via other topics like this was often done in meetings about parenting. 13 of my 49 observations (not counting the three case studies of Chapter 3) were about parenting. In 7 of these observations, gender was brought up as part of a discussion about parenting (the other 6 were mostly about disciplining children without addressing gender roles). Other topics via which gender equality or gender difference was (explicitly or implicitly) addressed were: health (see Case Study 1), empowering young men by finding their talents (O20-3), and controlling aggression (see Case Study 3).

Using the topic of parenting, the professionals started conversations about: men's relationships with their partner and/or the mother of their children (O5-4; O18-11; O21-1; O13-1); having a negotiating relationship with the mothers of their children (O5-4; O18-11; O21-1; O13-1); the importance of (female) partners having working lives (O4-2); violence and aggression in families (O21-1; O13-1; O18-12; O8), machismo (O13-1); traditional versus modern fatherhood (O21-1; O13-1; O18-11), differences and inequalities in raising boys and girls (O21-1; O13-1; O8-10; O18-11), communicating and having emotional bonds with children instead of being distant fathers (O21-1; O13-1; O16-1; O23-1) and disciplining children and specifically boys (O17-1; O21-1). Moreover, involving men in parenting in itself can be seen as a way to create more equality between men and women, as parenting tasks are still predominantly done by women. Addressing parenting was often done without discussing whether gender equality was one of the benefits of increasing fathers' involvement.

Because gender equality is mentioned or discussed as part of discussing other topics, the time granted to the topic is often brief. I observed that a professional would "slip in" a remark or a norm that is related to gender (in)equality without involving participants in further discussion (also seen in Case Study 3), which can hardly be expected to have a large impact, because hardly any reflection is incited.

Bringing up gender equality via other topics, especially parenting, allowed projects to talk about the issue without having to be very explicit about it. Starting with a more "accessible" topic like parenting created comfortable spaces for both the men and the professionals. Phrasing it as "parenting" furthermore made it an accessible topic for men, whereas "childcare" was considered less suitable. Such a way of involving men more in the family reproduces a masculinity in which men are not expected to be involved in care work, but are expected to be involved otherwise, especially as someone who disciplines (in negotiating ways).

In observations during which parenting was discussed, "talking" was presented as the crucial way forward in parenting. This points to the idea that men should no longer be strict distant or aggressive fathers (if they had been) and that having emotional bonds with children and talking with them reflect the accepted way to raise children. The ideal masculinity that is represented is a more peaceful or pacified masculinity (van Huis & van der Haar 2015), by which I mean that men's practices which previously were aggressive are now transformed into peaceful behaviour, including disciplining children in non-violent ways.[47] The pacified masculinity also aligns with the negotiating relationships within the family that De Swaan has indicated as having become dominant in Dutch society (1979; 1981).

To raise the issue via other topics can also have an unwanted impact on gender equality, as the professionals are in fact reproducing the idea that gender equality is a topic that men do not address openly. They reproduce the idea that men would not be compassionate enough to reflect on how their behaviour would affect women's wellbeing . In that sense, the projects construct non-compassionate masculinities, or more precisely non-openly compassionate masculinities, where women (not children) are concerned. Keeping in mind that many projects aimed to transform "traditional" men into "emancipated" men who support gender equality (Chapter 2), these non-(openly)compassionate masculinities are the opposite of what these projects aimed for.

[47] Besides as a model masculine practice in parenting, the term pacified masculinity also describes how men are transformed from men who are frustrated and angry with government institutions and former employers to men who are more suitable for the labour market (van Huis & van der Haar 2015).

S3: Limiting the hidden agenda: lifting the curtain between back- and frontstage

Some projects were more open about their gender equality goals, and professionals announced at the start of the project or meeting that gender equality was going to be a topic, although mostly using other words such as "differences between men and women" (O2-1), "masculinity" (O13-1), "emancipation" (O20-1), or "men's and women's emancipation" (O1-3).

In one of the projects, participants were invited to participate in cooking classes that doubled as group meetings in which a trainer would lead a discussion. The trainer (a man with an Afro-Caribbean background) started the meeting by reminding the group that the training's "basic idea is that we, men, think about ourselves, society, and our relationships with partners and so on." (O22-3) The trainer set thinking about relationships with partners as one of the main goals at the start of the meeting (though combined with other aims: see S1). As gender equality had been an important aim of this project (P22; I22), this created less discrepancy between backstage and front stage goals than I have seen in other observations. "Thinking about relationships with partners" is, of course, a very specific topic, while gender equality could cover many more topics. "Thinking" about "relationships", moreover only hints towards reflection about inequality. In other words, there was still some "tiptoeing" going on regarding the topic of gender equality in this introductory part of the meeting. This specific wording might have been intended to make the topic accessible and easier to relate to than a term like "gender equality" would have. Moreover, perhaps the professional did not present the meeting as about "inequality", because that would assume that there was such inequality in the participants' lives, while this was not yet known.

By using the phrase "we men" when addressing the basic idea of the training, the trainer framed relationships with partners as something that concerns men as a group, of which he is a part. Moreover, by using the term "partners" instead of wives or girlfriends, he does not articulate the assumption that these men are in heterosexual relationships.

The professional is trained in gender equality issues and part of a network of men who are actively trying to involve other men in gender equality (O22-1). His previous experience with gender equality issues and the embeddedness of the project in a women's organization might explain why the professional chose to openly introduce the project as (partly) being about "relationships with partners". This introduction seemed to make it easier to start a conversation about gender difference or equality during the rest of the meeting or project (I will discuss how this trainer further addressed gender equality where I explain strategy S6).

The organizations that were open about "emancipation" were women's organisations or projects that hired gender experts. The two projects that talked about "differences between men and women"[48] were welfare organizations that were influenced by the concept of "codes of masculinity". I will discuss one of these two as part of the next strategy.

S4: Making gender equality about men: Codes and costs of masculinity

When gender equality was discussed in some of the projects, it was made into a topic that concerned men, highlighting gender differences and the way they harmed men, rather than as a

[48] In 2.2.1, I already mentioned that a non-binary understanding of gender is absent in the project framing. The same goes for the project practices.

topic that concerned the way men hamper women. This was done by addressing the so-called codes and costs of masculinity (Messner 2000). Gender inequality was thus made to be about men, a way to turn a project's backstage goals into frontstage goals and a way to connect with men.

The "codes of masculinity" were introduced in a meeting that was organized for the professionals of all the projects by a trainer who had developed the codes. He described the "codes" as male characteristics to which men have to relate that can be seen as strengths or weaknesses, depending on the way men associate with them. Examples of such codes are: "I am supposed to earn a living for the ones who depend on me"; "I don't need help"; "I have control over myself. I am not afraid and don't cry" (O 24-1-2011; see also Van Huis 2014).

In a project organized by a welfare organization that works with homeless men, the discussion started with a female professional (T1, white Dutch background) writing "Differences between men and women" on a flip chart, after which participants as well as professionals highlighted disadvantages of being men.

A (white Dutch man): I think women are much more independent than men.

T1 (white Dutch female): What do you mean by that?

A: If the relationship's over, she is much more powerful. Because she has the children, but apart from that, it's easier for her to make the problems smaller. She can wash, she can cook, I couldn't cook when we split up. I had never done that.

B (white Dutch man): My wife can't cook. I always cook dinner.

[Another participant refers to men who are chefs, and participant A says that those men don't cook at home.]

Another trainer (T2) (white Dutch male): Let's move on. What other differences are there?

C: I wouldn't know. Can you give a hint?

T2: Women multi-task and men don't.

B: I don't agree with that.

T2: Making plans and organising, girls are better at that than boys [T1 writes "organising" under "women"]

B: Women plan relationships more ahead than men. My wife was already looking for a new house. She actually already said goodbye without informing me.

T1: Could the problem be communication? (....) You have to look at differences between men and women in [that].

> *A: A woman expects you to achieve something. (....) I've been speed dating and every woman asks: What do you do? They are all focused on a good job. (....)*
>
> *T2: Maybe you are right about that, if you look at the codes of masculinity – that's a difficult word – then it's: You are a real man if you put bread on the table. And that could get in the way. You could start thinking: I'm not a real man. But you shouldn't think that way. (O2-1)*

The conversation about gender in the quote above is started by asking about differences between men and women. Remarkably, both participants and professionals highlighted what they saw as advantages of being a woman and disadvantages of being a man: women are independent, have stronger bonds with children, and are able to look after themselves. At the same time women are portrayed as somewhat selfish and not to be trusted. In the rest of the meeting, both trainers accentuated these differences by listing more, for example: "women talk a lot"; and "men are hunters and are stressed until they have reached their goal. For women, that doesn't matter." There was some protest from Participant B, who did not recognize many of these differences. After mentioning the "code of masculinity" – "You are a real man if you put bread on the table" – one professional encouraged the men not to feel bad about themselves even if they could not fulfil the expectation of being a breadwinner. At this point, one of the participants picked up the trainer's "real man" narrative: "But I think [Participant B] is a real man, because he tries his best to find a job. I think everyone here is a real man. There are no losers at this table." (O2-1)

Participant A copied the "real man" narrative and highlighted that he thinks that it is not the men's fault that they cannot find a job or are otherwise unsuccessful. After this remark the first trainer again continued the narrative: "You have to tell yourself: I am a real man even though I don't have a job." She suggested that volunteer work could be an alternative to a paid job. She seemed to want to transform the idea that men should be breadwinners, but she also reproduced the idea that men should make themselves useful and be "real men".

The above shows how the professionals used "codes of masculinity" to which the participants were encouraged to relate. Though the professionals did mention that the codes were not fixed differences or rules men had to live by, and that as a man you can act or think differently, the professionals mainly reproduced many stereotypical differences between men and women, while participants (especially B) contested these and more often emphasized that men and women are similar.

In the next example, from a training about the costs of masculinity, a professional particularly highlights the costs for black men in the Netherlands. In the meeting a trainer (Afro-Caribbean background) aimed to let a group of boys think about their future. According to him, these boys do not "focus" enough on what they want to do, because they lack male role models. He specifically sees this as a problem of "black men" (O20-4). The trainer assumed that, while girls have their mothers as role models, these young men don't, because their fathers are not involved in their parenting. By thus assuming that absent fathers are harmful for boys and less so for girls, he makes gender inequality about how gender harms (black) men: a cost of masculinity. By letting the young men think about male role models, he aims to do something about this disadvantage and encourage them to focus more on their future. The young men have Afro-

Surinamese, Hindustani-Surinamese, Tunisian, Moroccan, and mixed Brazilian and white Dutch backgrounds (aged 15-17).

T: Your first role model of course is...

A (Afro-Surinamese background): Your parents.

T: Your mother and father, but who grew up with his father? [Two of the nine young men raise their hands.] I did not grow up with my father, and his father did not grew up with his, but that does not mean that you cannot be a father for your child. (....)

A: But my father isn't a role model to me.

T: (...) Why isn't he a role model?

A: He doesn't have a job and stuff.

T: Is that his own fault?

A: He gets fired all the time. [B, mixed Brazilian and white Dutch background] is my role model. [He is joking, B laughs.] I am my own role model.

T: What do you mean by that. You are not alone in this world, right?

A: You just try to do what's right, keep your values. Scarface is a sort of role model...

T: Scarface? What does Scarface bring you? Do you know how he dies?

C (Hindustani-Surinamese background): He is crazy cool!

D (Hindustani-Surinamese background): He is tough.

B: Yeah, he is tough.

T: Oh yeah? Who is Scarface? He sells cocaine. Do you know how cocaine affects people, how people are destroyed by it?

A: But I don't mean with criminality and stuff, just wanting something and going for it, and doing it in a tough way.

T: Believing in Scarface is like believing in Mickey Mouse. (O20-1)

Though participant A first mentions both parents as a role model, the trainer directs the conversation towards fathers and male role models. When A then mentions Scarface, an immigrant drug dealer in an American movie, the trainer mocks him, reminding him how Scarface gets killed. Though he did not give A room to explain his choice, A later claimed this

space and explained that he did not mean the criminal side of Scarface, but "going for it" and "toughness", yet the trainer continues to disapprove of his choice.

The trainer continues, warning the young men against getting involved in criminality by speaking about his own criminal past and involvement in drug trade. By telling this story the trainer sends out a double message to the young men. On the one hand, he tries to guide the young men in a direction that would benefit them more, which can be enabling. According to him the young men could make themselves into the men they want to be, if they gave it more thought. On the other hand, he also tells an exciting story about his own criminal past, which makes him look like a tough guy.

A similar double message is presented in another meeting with a group of boys (mostly Afro-Caribbean and Ghanaian backgrounds). In a school classroom, the same trainer discussed how gender inequality harmed women, but in an attempt to connect to men and to make the topic "about men" he sends out a conflicting message. After he asks them where they see themselves in 10 years, one boy responds he wants to do "something with sports". The trainer then asks: "Who has a girlfriend? Who has a boyfriend? Who wants to get married? What kind? Big breasts, big bottom?" One of the boys responds: "Everything big." (O20-4)

Though the trainer attempts not to be hetero-normative when he asks if the boys see themselves in a relationship in ten years, he does not wait for an answer and continues in a hetero-normative vein, focusing on breasts and bottoms and thereby sexualizing gender relationships. In the rest of the meeting, he continued to make similar remarks: "Women are not just [!] lust objects. I know what I'm talking about. I know a hot chick when I see one." Conflicting with this message, he later concludes the meeting saying that the boys should respect women. By presenting himself to the boys as someone who shares their macho behaviour and attitudes – which he seemed to assume was necessary to earn the boys' respect – the trainer reproduced and encouraged sexist attitudes. He moreover offered the boys little room to express their own thoughts.

Emphasizing difference by using codes of masculinity, highlighting costs of masculinity, and acting stereotypically masculine ensured that these projects were about men themselves. Making gender equality about men can be seen as an attempt to connect with men and involve them in gender equality issues. It is a way to present a backstage goal of gender equality in a way that can be appealing for men on the frontstage. Making gender equality about men themselves could thus be a stepping-stone to discuss the way gender inequality harms women. However, my observations showed that making gender equality about men can result in not (or hardly) discussing the way women are harmed by gender inequality at all. Moreover, seeing men as victims, or acting stereotypically masculine (tough, sexist) to connect with men can actively harm gender equality instead.

Combining gender equality goals with other goals (such as empowering men themselves), bringing up gender equality via other topics, and making gender equality mainly about costs of masculinity are all ways projects tried to connect to men and start conversations about gender equality. I have for instance witnessed conversations about the role of men in parenting, in which professionals and participants alike encouraged communicative, emotionally involved fatherhood and a peaceful/pacified masculinity. Yet when professionals made gender equality about men's issues, highlighted the costs of masculinity, or behaved in stereotypical ways, I

observed that differences between men and women were highlighted and reproduced, which can be harmful for gender equality.

Assuming that men would not be interested in discussing gender equality (re)produces non-compassionate masculinities. Being open about gender equality goals at the beginning of a project or a meeting instead stimulated compassionate masculinities (at least as a practice within the meetings). Being open from the start seemed to make it easier to bring up the topic throughout the meeting.

The observations so far have also shown that there was variation in the ways in which trainers offered participants the possibility to reflect: some asked open questions and gave time to respond, others spewed their opinions and norms without offering room for reflection, which can be expected to have a less positive impact on the way participants think about gender equality issues, especially if trainers act in sexist ways themselves.

4.2.2 Embodiment and materialization: tools, spaces, and bodies[49]

Professionals not only tried to involve men in gender equality with words, but also through embodied practices, (gendered) spaces, materials like cards with images or questions, and through the presence of male and female role models. These forms of embodiment and materialization were used for gender equality goals, but also to encourage men to become active, to feel better about themselves, and to eventually participate in (volunteer) work. I will here focus on how materials, spaces and embodiment were used in strategies to address gender equality.

By embodied practices I mean practices in which bodily movement was more important than verbal communication, although verbal communication was also part of the embodied strategies. The role of physicality, as well as the way bodies move or interact with each other, with materials, and in spaces can be important to understand social interventions for a number of reasons. Firstly, the chosen space and its organisation, not to mention any physical exertions or exercises, all constrain and enable action in different ways, they impact on the practices and conversations. Secondly, there are symbolic ways in which bodies and materials are part of the way professionals and participants communicate that are different from verbal communication. The shape and positioning of space, bodies, and materials symbolically show who was the trainer and who are participants. Trainers and participants present themselves in certain ways, or "perform" certain behaviour in order to communicate (Goffman 1978; Turner 1984: 41), including what is (appropriate) masculine or feminine behaviour (Butler 1993). Thirdly, embodiment is important because physical routine is key for the way cognition works and "how conceptual thought is shaped by many processes below the threshold of ordinary conscious awareness" (Rohrer 2007: 11). Fourth, embodiment is important for understanding the interventions as emotional experiences, because it involves senses in other ways than in verbal communication. The use of photographic images, for example, provokes the mind and emotions in different ways than words could (Barthes 1980; Sontag 1977). A fifth and last reason why embodiment and materiality is important in studying social interventions is that the presence or absence of persons and their use of space, bodies, and material make it possible to scrutinize and

[49] This section builds on insights from earlier work (van Huis & van der Haar 2015).

control the behaviour of people who might be seen as not conforming to certain norms (Foucault 1975/1991).

S5: Using question cards and cards with images

Cards with questions or images enabled strategies to direct conversations towards gender equality issues. Used in meetings that addressed gender equality and "participation", the cards were intended to let men reflect on their goals in life and in parenting. Similar cards with images are generally used in social work, but these projects also used specific cards to start conversations about topics related to gender equality.

The first example is from a project that was open about its gender equality goals from the start (S3). Most participants of this group had Somali backgrounds, the others had Moroccan, Afro-Caribbean, and Hindustani-Caribbean backgrounds. The project took place in a neighbourhood centre and was combined with a cooking class and meetings with a dietician. In this meeting, the trainer (Afro-Caribbean background) started a conversation with the help of question cards.

The men are sitting at tables in a classroom setup, with the trainer sitting at the head of this group of tables. After a short introduction, the trainer asks the participants to form pairs, gives each pair a question card, and asks them to discuss the questions. The first question is: "If you were a woman, which characteristics would you find important in a man?"

While discussing in pairs, one pair starts writing down a list and another starts doing the same. When their ten minutes are up, the trainer asks them to discuss their answers in the group. One of the men reads out their list of what they think women want men to be like: "To be respectful, to be patient, to give presents, to go out to restaurants on the weekend, to be honest, to honour commitments, to have communication skills, and to be friends."

One of the other participants follows by reading his list: "Handsome, respectful, caring, sweet, helping, a good listener, faithful, and educated."

The trainer asks if they see any differences between what they have just written down about good characteristics for men and what they themselves would want in a woman.

A participant responds that to him it is exactly the same. (O22-2)

The quote shows how the question cards were used to the direct conversation towards gender equality issues, guiding the men to imagine themselves in a woman's position and empathize with women and with women's wishes when it comes to men and masculinity in intimate relationships. The (imagined) women's perspectives made the men reflect on what is good behaviour for men and made them articulate considerate, loving, social, and honest kind of masculinities.

The trainer's encouragement to compare good characteristics of men with those of women, guided men to the idea that men and women are not that different when it comes to what kind of behaviour they find appealing in other people. The professional also did not direct participants towards a "difference idea" between men and women (like in S4), but left it open to participants what they saw as male virtues.

In the next example from the same session, a question card guided the men towards a conversation about same-sex relationships.

The question card reads: "Are you less of a man if you do not have a partner, or if you have a partner of the same sex?" After discussing the question in pairs, a participant (Somali background) responds to the group that he does not think someone is less of a man if he has no partner: "You just haven't found the right person yet." About having a partner with the same sex, he says that it depends if you are the man or the female in the relationship.

The trainer responds: "What do you mean the man and the woman in the relationship? (...) We always have a division between man and women in our minds, but it does not necessarily have to be that way."

The conversation then continues to be about dominant people in relationships. Some of the men argue that women can also be dominant. (O22-2)

The question card guided the men to reflect on masculinities, and on the idea of being perceived as "less of a man" when in a same-sex relationship or none at all. The way the trainer responded to the man's answer to the same-sex question was not very open, as he "corrected" the participant by dismissing the idea of a gender binary in relationships. Though not seeing relationships as necessarily divided in female and male roles could be liberating, the way the trainer corrected the participant can be seen as somewhat constraining, because he limited the participants' reflections.

As the next question card was not very clear, the trainer directed the discussion using follow-up questions. The question was: "What is your strongest opinion about women? Which opinions about women do you question?" Because not all participants understand the two questions, the trainer gives suggestions for "opinions" the participants and others might have: "Do you think women should always cook?"; "Who should take care of the children?" The suggestions make the questions less open and more directive, though they do let the participants reflect on their ideas about the divisions of household tasks. One of the men (Somali background) responds by saying that he thinks men and women are equal, that "she should have a job", and that whoever is at home at that moment should take care of the child.

The observations in this project showed that the cards helped to start conversations about gender (in)equality, and that this group of men was willing to talk about relationships, including same-sex relationships. The meeting did not show that the men had any "difficulties" talking about these topics. Only one of the men (Moroccan background) indicated that he did

not want to answer personal questions about his wife when the trainer asked him a question. He was willing to talk about issues in general terms and did engage in the discussion.

In another project, the conversation was guided to gender equality with the help of cards with images.[50] The female professional (Afro-Caribbean background) asked participants (all men with Afro-Caribbean backgrounds from Aruba and Curaçao) to pick a card from a small stack she held in her hands and respond to it. The cards all have photographs of a black man and a boy in parenting situations.

A man picks a card and looks at it. He shows the image to the group. It depicts a black man with a little boy on his lap. The man raises his finger and it looks like he is calmly speaking to his son. The boy has teary eyes.

T: "What do you see?"

A: "I see a father who corrects his son."

T: How does he do it?

A: With respect, he explains that he is not allowed to do something.

The men start talking about the way their parents corrected them when they were small and the way they do this with their own children. (O16-1)

The men compared what they saw on the cards to their own memories of similar situations. It seemed clear to the participants that they were asked to make associations and reflect on their own daily lives, their behaviour, and their norms. The purpose of the cards seemed clear to all the men in the group, perhaps because it was not their first time in a meeting like this, but perhaps also because photographs provoke responses on a more emotional level (Sontag 1977; Barthes 1980) (van Huis & van der Haar 2015).

The card of the father correcting his son led to a conversation about the use of violence in parenting. After seeing the image, one participant claimed he would hit his son if he would disrespect him. Two professionals and the other men tried to convince him that that would not be right. One professional (Afro-Caribbean background) highlighted that violence in parenting is not allowed in the Netherlands. The card of the father correcting his son thus had a normative message: that you should discipline your children peacefully. All the cards had such normative or normalizing images and showed model behaviours for fathers: a father who plays football with his son; a boy who plays with toys; a father who reads to his son; a father who bathes his baby; and a father who goes on a stroll holding his son's hand. The man on the card seems to be an ideal model which the men should mirror. An involved fatherhood and a pacified masculinity seems to be the norm (van Huis & van der Haar 2015).

[50] I have also used this example in an article with Marleen van der Haar (van Huis & van der Haar 2015).

By showing a black man and child on the cards, the professional aimed to connect to the men with an Afro-Caribbean background in this specific project. In an interview, she explained that she found that it was easier for the men to identify with pictures of black men (I16) (van Huis & van der Haar 2015).

The cards with questions and images helped guide men to topics that the professionals saw as difficult. Introducing these topics with playful methods gave the meetings a light, playful atmosphere, as picking a card resembles playing a game. In the interviews, professionals said that they expected difficulty in discussing gender equality issues with men. Moreover, there was a certain distance between the professional and the question or the image on the card: the professional does not ask a specific person, the question is asked because someone happened to pick a card. The cards thus prevented the professionals from feeling like they were "blaming" individual participants for any wrongdoing, which prevented the "protection mechanism" from kicking in. This is one of the mechanisms I identified by which gender equality faded as a topic: not or only briefly discussing gender equality to protect men already experiencing stigmatization (see 3.4).

Some cards with questions and images can be seen as normalizing. Participants' norms were scrutinized, they were encouraged/pushed to conform to an ideal pacified masculinity, and they were sometimes quickly corrected (both by professionals and other participants) if they expressed non-ideal opinions. On the other hand, hegemonic masculine norms were challenged in a liberating way, and participants were given the opportunity to provide their own reflections and opinions on the cards' questions and images.

S6: Embodied practices and spaces: Classical masculinity and femininity

There was more to the projects than talking, there were also many physical activities. The difference between verbal and non-verbal activities, however, is not that easy to determine. Even in meetings that mainly consisted of talking, physicality was part of what was communicated. All projects had meeting rooms, most often in neighbourhood centres, that resembled classrooms, with tables and chairs in a U-shape. The way material and people were positioned communicated that there was going to be talking (see also van Huis & van der Haar 2015). The organization of space, material, and bodies also communicated that one or two people would lead the conversation: by their position in the room, by being dressed a little more formally, and by the way they used white boards, flip charts, or PowerPoint presentations. Sometimes one of the professionals would sit among the group of men, which symbolically represented that they were one of them.

Bringing together a group of men for talking or other activities enabled the men to speak their mind, to learn from each other, and to bond with other men. It was also a way, however, in which professionals were able to scrutinize and encourage them, or let men encourage each other to conform to certain norms, or to liberate each other from other norms.

There were a few non-verbal (or less verbal) embodied strategies that were specifically aimed at involving men in gender equality. These spaces and activities can be divided in classically masculine or classically feminine categories.

Classically (working-class) masculine spaces and practices were repair workshops and sports activities. These activities can also be seen as activities specifically aimed at working-class men. The sports activities included soccer, boxing, cycling, fitness, wall climbing, hiking, and

many other sports. Some of these were deliberately chosen to introduce the men to "other" sports "to broaden their horizons" (I2), for example the more "elite" golf and tennis, or the more "feminine" yoga. Professionals expected masculine activities to be inviting as well as specifically empowering for men. Out of the 23 projects, sports activities were included in 12 and repair workshops in 6. In order to create inviting spaces, professionals needed to make assumptions about where men from their target groups would like to be and what they would like to do. Creating such inviting spaces and practices sometimes reproduced classical male stereotypes – men were presumed to like doing sports and repairing things – which could have excluded men who were not interested in such stereotypically male practices and spaces.

Classically feminine spaces and practices like kitchens and cooking classes were expected to be transformative for men as they would help men contribute more in (specific) household tasks. Men were involved in cooking activities in 9 of the 23 projects. Placing men in such transformative spaces (or inviting men to place themselves in them) could be intended as a way to transform masculinities, but it still involved only selected practices that professionals presumed men would be interested in, in contrast to other caring activities. Some professionals, for example, argued that men would be interested in cooking because many professional chefs are men (I22; I11). In its communication with the participants, one project decided to highlight that they would become "health experts" within their family and community in order to make the projects attractive for men (I22). Although this sounds empowering, it could encourage an authoritative kind of masculinity within the family, which harms gender equality.

The cooking classes were also organized because professionals expected that some men from their target groups did not have healthy diets (Case Study 3; O5). As this was a way for the men to improve their own lifestyles, the professionals highlighted the healthy diet in the way they promoted the activities to men and not their gender equality reasons. With this in mind, though, learning how to cook, or learning new ways to cook, could contribute to gender equality in two ways. Firstly, cooking can be seen as an important contribution to a household and a caring skill that is predominantly done by women. Having men (in heterosexual relationships) doing more household tasks would therefore offer women some more time and freedom. Secondly, the goal of cooking healthy food can be seen as affecting gender equality if cooking and eating unhealthily is considered a "cost of masculinity" (Messner 2000), a negative practice that comes with dominant practices of being a man. The masculinities that were encouraged and produced here were more healthy and caring masculinities.

In choosing the meals that the men prepared, the professionals took into account what was healthy and affordable, and sometimes also what would appeal to working-class men or men from specific ethnic backgrounds. As seen in Case Study 3, one professional (Afro-Surinamese and white Dutch background) chose to make traditional Dutch dishes (mashed potatoes with kale and sausage), but also introduced the white Dutch working-class men to a Surinamese dish.

Other activities and spaces that were aimed at gender equality were father-child or specifically father-son activities. I attended meetings in which fathers played games with their children, for example in a gym, going from one game or piece of sports equipment to the next. Sports coaches instructed the fathers on how they could guide the child in playing games, encouraging them to use physical contact and verbal support and guidance, teaching fathers to be supportive (O6-2; O4-3). In another project, father-son activities were specifically aimed at improving the emotional bond between the two, for example through tug-of-war, ball games,

and physical trust exercises, combined with verbal techniques like being encouraged to talk more about themselves, their feelings, and how fathers saw their son and vice versa (O23-1).

Teaching men how to cook, encouraging them to cook, and engaging them in activities with their children are all ways of enabling men that can be helpful for women too. However, without having the men reflect on what they were doing, impacts can be expected to be limited. Furthermore, any positive impact would also depends on how decisions are made and tasks are divided, including whether men would present themselves as the new "experts" on cooking or if they would have a more equal approach.

S7: Involving both men and women: Male and female role models as embodiments of equality

Another strategy to encourage gender equality through embodiment was by having both men and women involved in the project. Professionals, both male and female, intentionally involved male professionals and volunteers in the projects because they thought that this would create a stronger connection between professionals/volunteers and participants. Some professionals said that male professionals and volunteers could function as (ethnic) male role models for the participants (I1; I4; I12; I16; I17). However, welcoming women in the project was also a way to relate to gender equality.

About half of the professionals who organized and carried out the projects were men and half of them were women. Social work in the Netherlands is female dominated (74%, viz. De Klaver *et al.* 2014: 137). However, most projects (16 out of 23) worked with combinations of female and male professionals, 5 with men only, and 2 with only women. When external trainers who visited the group are taken into account, 20 projects combined male and female professionals, and no projects worked with female professionals exclusively. Moreover, many of the professionals had migration backgrounds. In 17 of the 23 projects a professional with a migration background was involved. Sometimes all the professionals involved had migration backgrounds, and in four projects the professionals (men and women) all had the same ethnic (or national) backgrounds as their participants. The professionals generally had a more educated background than participants, although some did have working-class family backgrounds.

The physical presence of men and women, and of ethnically diverse men and women, symbolically sends out a message about equality; it can be seen as an embodiment of the idea. A diverse staff thus communicated that, although the projects are (partly) about the role of men in gender equality, women have a say in it as well. Having men involved (exclusively or not) could make gender equality more about men (S4) (if gender equality was even addressed), while women's perspectives could also be voiced in a project exclusively organized by men (Case Study 2).

I did not see any differences in the participants' responses to male or female professionals. Participants listened to both male and female professionals, asked them questions, and debated with them. If the male professionals themselves acted in gender equal ways (which was not always the case, see S4), they could be seen as role models who improved gender equality. Some male professionals articulated a positive stance on gender equality, which could help participants reflect on their own views on gender equality, while others presented sexist positions. However, men were not the only role models in the projects, women also fulfilled such roles. Female professionals could act as "examples to be imitated", for the men themselves,

or as examples by which participants could reflect on social norms about women. The presence of women, moreover, offered women voices within the projects and prevented an atmosphere of exclusion in which women's voices and interests could have been overlooked. However, also in the projects where female professionals were involved they mainly became concerned with the participants' own interests as they tried to connect to what the participants themselves wanted and needed.

In some projects, the female organizers had long-lasting supporting relationships with participants and with other members of the community (I5; O5; I9; O11; I12; I16; O16). Most often these women shared the same ethnic backgrounds as the people and families they supported (exceptions: O11; O12). These observations, although limited in number, support the idea that it is important to look beyond the importance of male role models and also recognize the importance of professionals who have a consistent role in the communities and the lives of men (which supports research by Robb *et al.* 2015: 31) and the fact that women can be (ethnic) role models for men as well.

The three last strategies (S5-S7) show that embodiment, material, spaces, and activities provided important means for professionals to address gender equality. The most observable impact was that the men were able to reflect on gender equality topics through the use of question cards and images. By confronting men with pre-formulated but open questions, and by letting men take up the perspective of women, men could thus reflect on masculinity and femininity, and more specifically on their role in the family and in relationships. Participants were encouraged to be involved, caring, non-violent fathers; pacified/peaceful masculinity was encouraged. Another observed impact was that projects encouraged caring masculinities at home by having men cooking and doing activities with their children. The involvement of both men and women as professionals in most projects created environments that were not exclusively male. Men as well as women could be role models and could defend men's as well as women's interests (though they did not necessarily do so). The men responded positively to the presence of men as well as women, especially when it concerned professionals who had long-term ties to their communities.

4.2.3 De-essentializing stories: Enabling change through historical and personal perspectives

Men were also involved in gender equality by telling de-essentializing stories. By de-essentializing, I mean questioning or disrupting notions of differences between men and women or other categorizations that are presumed fixed (essentialist) or reified. De-essentializing is a way in which constructionist social scientists approach categorizations in the social world to reveal the dynamics of the social world and/or offer a critical voice (on ethnicity, culture, and religion: Baumann & Sunier 1995: 4; Baumann 1999: 87; on gender: Butler 1993). Essentializing and de-essentializing practices, however, also take place in everyday interaction.

In my observations I noticed that professionals sometimes de-essentialized differences between men and women by questioning stereotypes, prejudices, or the fixedness of gender norms (though some professionals also essentialized). They did so by telling stories that showed

how such things had already changed in the past, implying that more changes were possible in the future. Sometimes the stories were accompanied with suggested directions for change.

Whether they impacted positively on gender+ equality or whether they reproduced other inequalities depended on the way these stories were told and how suggestions for future changes were made, in an open or a directive way, by reproducing stereotypes or by de-essentializing differences. The de-essentializing stories professionals told were part of historic tales or of the professionals' personal lives. The personal histories were furthermore incentives for participants to talk about similar topics. Some projects especially hired gender experts to offer such de-essentializing narratives.

S8: Lessons from history and perspectives for change

A key strategy to involve men in gender equality issues was by putting gender (in)equality in a historical perspective (O1-3, O4-2, O8-8; O15-2). One project that aimed to involve men in volunteer work in a community centre hired an external trainer to talk about "male emancipation" (S3). The professional trainer (male, white Dutch background) had an academic gender-studies background and was specialised in discussing gender equality issues with men. My observations show how the trainer tried to involve the participants in thinking about "male emancipation" by using cards with images (S5). He first let the men talk about what they thought "emancipation" was and put the topic in a historical perspective afterwards.

Postcards with colourful images are spread out over three tables in the middle of the room. The cards show images of two bulls fighting, a woman wrapped in tin foil, a knife and fork, abstract images with many different colours, an image of a woman in a suit, and many other things. The trainer asks the participants to pick one card that represents women's emancipation to them and a second that represents male emancipation. The participants stand up and start walking around the table looking at the cards, and slowly they all start picking a card. There is not much conversation going on.

After the participants have sat down with their cards, the trainer asks them to explain why they picked their card. He writes key words on a flip chart divided in two columns: one for female and one for male emancipation.

Without much reference to the cards, the participants freely associate on what emancipation means to them. Based on what they say, the trainer starts writing between the two columns: "to take part in something", "to work together", "to be independent", "to be equal", "to have the same rights and duties", "participation", "respect".

A (Kurdish background): "Men are women and women are men in the Netherlands" (...)

B (Iraqi background) responds: "In Arab countries, [women can do] no cycling, not alone in the world..."

> *C (white female volunteer): "What do you think about that? (...) Do you want women to be held back or free?"*
>
> *B: "Free."*
>
> *D (Eastern European background): "Too much freedom isn't good either."*
>
> *When another participant asks what he means, D responds that people should respect their parents, and he is not asked why he mentions this in relation to emancipation. The trainer starts explaining that in the Netherlands women were legally considered incompetent to participate in legal proceedings until the 1970s: "They weren't allowed to make major purchases, like buying a car, and rape was legal within a marriage." (O1-3)*

This (short) historical reference can be seen as a way in which the professional placed the participants' remarks in a more dynamic perspective specific to the Dutch situation, contrasting the image that was being created in the discussion of a situation in which there is gender equality in the Netherlands as opposed to other parts of the world. He showed that the current state of gender (in)equality in the Netherlands is not in any essentialist way connected to Dutch society, but something that was achieved over time, implying that it is achievable for "others". After more discussion, the trainer continues to suggest a way forward based on his historical perspective.

> *Trainer: "Society is changing. The way men and women are part of the world is changing. So we have to go along with that change a bit. It changes the way you think about yourself."*
>
> *The trainer continues to give an overview of changes in Dutch legislation where it concerns women (voting rights, abortion rights, and more). He gives an overview of feminist movements (in three waves of feminism). He explains that in the Netherlands people think that gender equality has been achieved, but not for Muslim women. He claims that this is a misconception: "Because us men never had to change anything".*
>
> *"There are two ways forward", the trainer says: "one is to turn back to the old situation, the other is for men to contribute more to care work, which according to him offers a more balanced situation." (O1-3)*

In this excerpt, the trainer highlights what has changed in Dutch gender (in)equality history, which according to him has implications for the future of men. He makes it an argument that concerns men (S4), by highlighting changes in male identity. He also refers to a "crisis of masculinity" (not in the quote). The two options he presents are to either stop gender equality or to be supportive of changes and adapt. He clearly promotes the second option. This type of open encouragement for supporting gender equality was rare in the projects. The men did not

reject this idea, but again there was not a very open discussion about the men's own situations and wishes, nor was there a response from the man who said that too much freedom was not good. Another participant, E, did respond, highlighting his perspective as an "autochtonous" (white Dutch) man.

E: I don't see the crisis you talk about (...) I think it's such a traditional discussion. For me it is different. I'm the only autochtonous person here, but if you as a woman want to be a manager, fine, and if your man wants to do the dishes, that's fine too.

T: But the manager has the support of his wife, also emotionally. If you become a father you only have two days to build a bond with your child.

E: I like the idea of discussing it at the kitchen table.

T: The question is, is that an equal conversation?

E: Maybe I'm assuming too easily, I just assume that you organize things with each other. Maybe I think too simply.

T: On the one hand that's good, because you should think from the starting point of possibilities, and many steps have been taken.

E: It also depends if you're a caring person.

T: It also depends on what you teach men. (O1-3)

In this quote, E explains that he does not believe men are in any kind of crisis, claiming that discussing gender equality is not relevant to him as a white Dutch ("autochtonous") man, and thereby implying that gender inequality is only relevant for people who are "allochtonous", culturally different from "the Dutch". What is left to discuss for white people, he believes, is inequality at the top of companies, and he sees it as up to individuals to decide whether they choose high-end jobs, ignoring structural unequal opportunities. The trainer tried to convince the participant that inequality is part of the way people are socialized and not (only) a result of individual choices. The trainer in this way clearly tried to address the participant's essentialist views. When he gave a historical perspective and his vision of the future, he did so by offering an alternative perspective. In a way this can be seen as "correcting" or constraining the participant, but it could also be seen as offering a liberating new perspective.

The historical perspective, which I also noticed in a few other observations (O4-2, O8-7; O15-2), can de-essentialize ideas about roles and inequalities people have, highlighting possibilities for change and helping develop ideas for new directions for change. However, whether this is an enabling practice or a constraining practice arguably depends on whether participants are offered space to express their own views, which was only done in limited ways.

S9: Telling personal stories: De-essentializing and providing a (good) example

Another way in which professionals addressed gender equality and de-essentialized gender was by using their personal histories as examples. With these personal stories the professionals introduced topics and showed they could relate to the participants' complex lives, offering insight or new ways to solve problems. Sometimes the stories were about problems professionals had solved, sometimes about certain behaviour that they saw as noteworthy, presenting it as an example that could (or should) be followed by others.

One trainer (former-Yugoslavian background) used such a story to introduce the topic of gender (in)equality as he talked about his experiences upon migrating to the Netherlands.

When I arrived here, I had a small culture shock. I arrived in a village. The women took the children to school and stayed at home the rest of the day. I had just left a socialist country, where there were no part-time jobs and all women worked. I thought: God, what do they do all day? Emancipation did change some things, but women still had to do domestic work on top of [their job]. I want to talk about freedom in making choices, to me, emancipation is making choices. Of course men have to make choices as well. (...) But that is my experience. How is that for you? (O13-3)

The trainer notes the difference between men and women as something that he noticed that was different about the Netherlands, compared to his country of origin, depicting the Dutch situation of the Netherlands as "unemancipated". This shows a counter-narrative to the more dominant discourses in which Dutch (white) people are represented as gender equal. He moreover highlighted that the Netherlands has changed (S8) and offered the men a personal definition of "emancipation" as "making choices", which emphasized agency.

The story provided an incentive for the participants to talk about gender relationships in their own homes, but most started talking about their parents' (unequal) relationships instead.

A (white Dutch): My mother worked until midnight. My father helped. I think that happened automatically. Not saying it's a woman's task, just modern.

B (white Dutch): My father didn't do anything except sleep and work, and my mother worked as well. [He later spoke about the negative consequences he suffered after always being put down by his father.]

C (white Dutch): My parents both worked in shifts. I never saw them. I cooked for myself. It didn't always go well. I did not learn to stay on the right path. For my parents it also wasn't good. They had fights. It turned into one big mess.

T: Does it matter if it's your father or mother [who is there to take care of you]?

C (white Dutch): No, that doesn't matter.

D (Afro-Caribbean background): Both my father and mother worked. My father was strict, too strict. We weren't allowed to do anything, no sports, no playing. I lived on a farm and we had to work. [He says more about his father's strictness and his own violent upbringing]. I don't want to be like that with my children. They are allowed to do things, I listen to them. [He explains how he takes care of his daughters and brings them to school].

T: Wow. Thank you for your story. What strikes me [is that] we are talking about talents here: for carpentry, for welding, but you are a pedagogical talent, the way you talk about your children. (O13-3)

The quote shows how some participants started talking about the way their parents divided care and work, though in relation to what it did to them, not in relation to the consequences this division it might have for men or women. The trainer tried to keep the participants on topic by asking whether it matters if a woman or a man takes care of children. He also highlighted D's qualities as a father, thereby complimenting him and reinforcing the importance of the role of men in the family. He furthermore connected the "participation" goals of the project with the "emancipation" ones by saying that men's "talents" are not only to be found in work ("welding") but also in being a father or being a "pedagogical talent". Most importantly, he managed to get the men to talk about their private lives. Again, though, the discussion was less about their own roles and more about those of their parents, and it was more about their own problems than about ways to improve lives of women or change gender inequality.

The next example shows how telling a personal story in order to provide a good example can also be problematic. In one project whose participants had mainly Moroccan backgrounds, a female educator (T1, white Dutch) was asked to talk about "parenting in the digital era". Another white Dutch (male) professional joined the conversation (T2). At one point, T1 switches the conversation to her own situation.

T1 (white Dutch woman): You are from Morocco?

A: Yes

T1: It used to be that the man would work. I work and I have children. My husband works and has children. If he is home earlier, he will cook. We are both father and mother for the children. If [the child] asks me something, I first ask: Have you asked your father already? And vice versa. The first answer counts.

A: The man is not in charge because he works and the woman is at home. My wife works in the home. I do the groceries. (....)

T2 (white Dutch man): I think it's beautiful that men's roles and women's roles have become more similar.

> *T1: You understand each other better, because you experience similar things, but it also requires more organising and discussion. (...) It's difficult, but it's worth it. If our children are doing well, we are doing well.*
>
> *A: My son, my second, he once falsified my autograph and wrote a letter for school. The teacher called me. I didn't lie on behalf of my children. I didn't hit him. He went to his room and hasn't done anything [like that] since that time. He later went to university. (O4-2)*

The quote above seemingly shows some discontinuities. When the trainer guessed whether a participant was from Morocco, this did not have explicitly consequences for her further conversation. She continued by highlighting a change "It used to be that the man would work" (S8) and then explained how tasks were divided in her own household. Establishing that a participant was from Morocco and then explaining the situation of her household created the assumption that her situation is different from the way (one of the) participants divided work and care. The participant tried to highlight that dividing tasks does not mean inequality, to which he gets no response. It seems that the personal story triggered him to tell one too. Maybe he also wanted to counter the suggestion that there was something wrong with the way he raised his child(ren). Saying later that he did not hit his child and that his son had gone to university also seemed intended to counter the professional's stereotypical expectations. Though these expectations were not made explicit, the sequence of the conversation seemed to imply that the professional felt the need to tell a story about how things are done in the Netherlands because the man had a Moroccan background.

It could furthermore be seen as problematic that these were two white professionals presenting their behaviour and opinions as the norm to immigrant men. Though this is not necessarily a problem, it becomes one when professionals ask no questions and simply expect migrant men not to raise their children or treat their partners right, all the while portraying themselves as good examples. This ensures the professionals take up most of the space and create images of contrasting behaviour or norms along the lines of ethnicity, reproducing stereotypes based on prejudice with a possibly alienating impact.

Stories by participants were also sometimes used as an incentive for others to reflect on gender equality issues. One professional, who knew more about a participant from previous individual conversations with him, asked the man in the group to talk about how he changed his way of being a father when he had children with his second wife. The man explained that he used to be a distant and strict father, but now spends more time with his children and is less strict. Afterwards, the professional said in the group that he recognized the story from how his own father and he himself changed when he got older: He too is now much less strict with the children from his second marriage (O18). The participant's story brought the topic closer to the participants and allowed the professional to bring in his own story and his message about the importance of being involved in parenting and not being a very strict father.

These examples show how personal stories were used to start conversations about intimate relationships and to offer possibilities for change by de-essentializing gender. However, it can be constraining and alienating/excluding when professionals present themselves as

examples to be followed, while (implicitly) depicting participants, without asking about their situation, as doing something wrong.

S10 Outsourcing to (de-essentializing) gender experts

As we have seen in some of the examples above, some organizations outsourced discussing gender equality to trainers who had more experience with it or were specialized in the topic (O1, O15, O22). Specialized in discussing gender equality with men, some of these trainers managed to combine letting men reflect on their own lives with letting them reflect on those of women. They thus de-essentialized reified understandings of difference and did not reproduce stereotypes that further stigmatized men (O1, O22).

Hiring external trainers was not only done in order to discuss gender (in)equality, but also to discuss other topics, such as parenting, health, discrimination, volunteer work, and empowerment (or "talents" O20-3). Outsourcing was a way for an organization to make sure that someone with experience and expertise discussed the topic. It can be a way to gain more knowledge about how to address such issues within an organization, yet it can also be a way not to have to discuss gender equality themselves.

In these practices, gender equality in most cases meant more equal divisions of care and work tasks. Using historical perspectives, personal stories, and outside gender experts (S8-S10) were all strategies to introduce gender equality as a topic and to de-essentialize fixed ideas about gender difference. These conversations, however, did not guarantee a positive impact on gender+ equality. Even when professionals succeeded in discussing gender equality, it was often very brief, and it seemed to be difficult to let men reflect openly while not reproducing stereotypes and prejudices, if not about gender, then about minoritized groups. In the observations where professionals did succeed in discussing gender in de-essentializing and non-directive ways while giving participants space to reflect on themselves, the observed impact was that men discussed gender equality and difference. In these conversations, men who expressed gender equal values or noted their involvement in parenting were praised, and men who expressed views against gender equality were questioned or offered alternative views.

4.3 Conclusion: The observed and expected impact of strategies to involve men in gender equality on facets of inequality

In this chapter I have analysed how projects tried to involve men in gender equality issues, which mostly happened on the initiative of professionals (top-down). Only in rare cases did participants raise issues relating to gender (in)equality. I have listed the strategies that professionals used to attract men to their projects and introduce them to conversations and activities that addressed gender equality. These strategies are linked to the projects' backstage and frontstage positioning (hiding or revealing) of their gender equality goal; to their choices in terms of embodiment and methods/tools; and to the choices they made that made it possible to see gender relations as dynamic and having the potential to change.

The first strategies (S1-S4) concerned the ways in which professionals placed their gender equality goal backstage or frontstage in the projects, either by combining and balancing gender equality with other topics that were expected to be more appealing to men, by introducing it through other topics, or by being open about the gender equality goal from the start. Another way to place gender equality frontstage was by making gender equality about men and specifically about the costs of masculinity (Messner 2000), highlighting the ways in which men were disadvantaged by gender equality, but ignoring that these costs generally come with more privileged social locations, identities, and norms.

Secondly, there were strategies that were embodied and/or materialized (S5-S7): professionals used tools like cards with questions or images; they organized embodied practices in classically masculine or feminine spaces in order to be inviting to men or be transformative. Male professionals were recruited under the assumption that they would better connect with male participants and be role models who promoted gender equality (or the "participation" goals). The presence of female professionals created environments that were not exclusively male in which female voices were heard as well.

Thirdly, there were strategies that consisted of telling de-essentializing stories (S8-S10). Placing gender equality in a historical perspective and telling personal stories (also meant to connect with men and let them "open up") were both ways to introduce the topic of gender equality and highlight possibilities for change towards more equality. Some projects hired specialized external gender equality trainers in order to discuss the topic in de-essentializing ways and to gain such knowledge within the organization.

Some of the strategies impacted on social locations by offering men a wider range of possibilities of how to act as men. Men were subtly introduced to gender equality topics through other topics, especially parenting, and with the use of prompts or triggering cards with visuals. Assuming that (some of) these men previously would be more aggressive and less verbally communicative, they were encouraged to be involved in parenting and to discipline children in a communicative, non-aggressive way with the aim of constructing a more peaceful or pacified masculinity (van Huis & van der Haar 2013). The men also encouraged each other to do so. Caring tasks for children got less attention than bonding with children and disciplining them. With prompts and conversations, men were also encouraged to reflect on how they treated their sons and daughters differently, and were encouraged to communicate peacefully as spouses and back each other up on decisions about disciplining children. The impact of these practices that I observed was that some of the men reflected on what the professionals articulated: the idea that the best way to discipline children is by creating a bond with them from an early age and by communicating with them in peaceful ways. The same goes for the importance of harmonizing with the rules made by the mother of the child: several participants told the other men that to discipline children men and women need to back each other up.

Bringing up gender equality via other topics, (initially) hiding the gender equality goals (S2), and making gender equality about men themselves (S4) left little room for the gender equality goal where it concerned the way men hamper women. The "via other topics" strategy implied that gender equality is a topic men would not be interested in, thereby (re)producing a non-(openly)compassionate form of masculinity where women's issues were concerned. The same goes for the embodied practices related to gender equality. While learning how to cook and encouraging men to do activities with children could help men take on more parenting and

(some) more household tasks (if they did not already), not letting men reflect on whether they hamper women in any way, or not creating awareness about how men can improve gender equality, also leads to non-(openly)compassionate masculinities.

Making gender equality about men (S4), while offering possibilities to connect with men, also reproduced stereotypes. Using the idea of "codes of masculinity" to highlight differences between men and women (men as "breadwinners" and "hunters") also helped reproduce these stereotypical differences, rather than question or break them down. Even though there were attempts to do something about these stereotypes, they were more strongly reproduced than questioned in the observations. Some projects reproduced stereotypes through their embodied practices (S6): men were invited to repair workshops or sports activities. Including these classically (working-class) masculine practices aimed to create inviting spaces for (working-class) men, which can be empowering for men who are attracted to such activities, but they do not positively (or necessarily negatively) affect gender equality.

Being open about gender equality goals from the start (S3) and preparing meetings with prompts or cards with questions or images (S5) helped professionals start conversations about gender equality. They helped men reflect on the way they were involved in parenting and questioned typically male and female roles in relationships, including the division of care and work tasks. Using personal stories and historical perspectives on gender equality also helped professionals guide men to talk about gender (in)equality. With these strategies, professionals managed to present de-essentialized views of gender as well as of ethnic/national differences concerning gender. Both professionals and participants articulated non-oppressive masculinities: to be involved, communicative, non-aggressive, and non-violent men and fathers who had strong emotional bonds with their children; to be men who also perform household tasks like cooking and doing activities with children. The conversations also offered men non-stereotypical ideas about what female practices were: having a working life and an equal voices in the parenting of children. These conversations and embodied practices could stimulate more equal social locations for both men and women, as they created more possibilities for both (if they did not have these possibilities already) and offered a framework to identify with gender equality as a cause. Even though many professionals were reluctant to have open conversations about gender equality for fear of alienating men to the point of leaving the project, I did not see men protesting against such open conversations.

Juxtaposing the non-(openly)compasionate and (openly) compassionate masculinities presented above can also be seen as impacting on norms. Not only were men's horizons broadened as they were offered alternative ways of thinking and behaving, they were also presented with norms. Being involved in parenting, being non-violent, and communicating with one's children and with one's spouse about parenting are all norms that were presented as desirable. When it comes to an equal division of work and care, men were praised for saying that they performed tasks equally or "helped" women, and criticized for saying they would not allow women to work. Though professionals would not explicitly tell participants to divide household tasks more equally, there is of course a normative side to teaching men how to cook that is in favour of men performing (limited) household tasks too.

This normative perspective closely resonates with feminist discourses as well as with culturalist discourses in which especially migrant men are assumed to have problematic domineering relationships. Evincing traits from both discourses, the strategies professionals used show how they tried to connect with participants as equals, while at the same time pushing them

towards certain norms, revealing egalitarian paternalist strategies (van den Berg 2013, see also 2.3.2)

When the professionals' questions, prompts, visuals, and stories gave men incentives (and space) to reflect on their relationships with the women in their lives and the position of women in a more general sense, these were enabling and liberating moments, as they allowed participants to rethink their behaviour, form their own opinion, and possibly formulate directions for change. At other moments, men were simply told that they were wrong and should change their behaviour, which was constraining and normalizing. Either way, both these kinds of interventions can be normalizing when they encourage men to adapt to a dominant norm if that is contrary to the way they were socialized or the way they choose to act, but the second option is far more constraining. The involved fatherhood and pacified masculinity that are produced in the projects can be seen as liberating in cases when a hegemonically strict and distant fatherhood pushed men to discipline children in aggressive ways prior to the project. Yet, as hegemonic masculinities are still omnipresent, a participant could remain conflicted between the ideal masculinity constructed in the project and the hegemonic one which he was socialized with. Reflections on these conflicting norm structures could let men make conscious choices about which norm structures to follow.

It is noteworthy that women's organizations and projects that hired external gender experts were the ones that most explicitly addressed gender equality issues. These organizations and professionals found ways to discuss these issues in more open non-directive ways in which stereotypes were avoided or de-essentialized. They did this with the use of gender experts who used tools to encourage conversations about gender equality, told personal stories, or spoke about the (Dutch) history of gender equality. These organizations seemed to consider it self-evident that gender equality issues were important. For the organizations and professionals that focussed on parenting, meanwhile, it sometimes seemed hard to go beyond the goal of involving men in parenting in a way that more explicitly discussed gender equality issues. One migrant organization that had been working with men for longer and had developed some tools did manage to address the issue. This leads me to conclude that a sense of the importance of gender equality, combined with tools, knowledge, as well as experience in working with men on this issue leads to more successful ways of addressing gender equality.

Overall, the projects did address gender equality, but this attention was limited compared to the "participation" goal, which leads me to expect that their impact on gender inequality in participants' lives was limited. Whether and how the participants believe the interventions, including their efforts to involve men in gender equality issues, impacted on their everyday lives will be answered in the next chapter, which focuses on the men's perceptions and lives.

CHAPTER 5

INEQUALITIES AND INTERVENTIONS IN MEN'S LIVES: UNDERSTANDING PROJECT PRACTICES FROM THE PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES

The impact of the interventions on men's lives, including the changes they experience in their social locations, identities, and norms (RQ1d), can be better understood in the context of the men's own perspectives on unequal positions and related problems. Therefore, the perspectives of the participating men are at the heart of this chapter, which tackles the following questions: How do participants perceive inequality in their lives? How does this differ from professionals' perspectives? And how do participants experience the projects and the effects on their lives? I will first present an analysis of the men's narratives about inequalities, which I will compare to the way professionals framed inequalities, followed by an analysis of how the participants thought the projects changed their lives. I will specifically address how they felt about the projects' efforts to involve men in gender equality and which possibilities they see to address gender (in)equality more openly in group work.

5.1 PERCEPTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL AND STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

In my interviews, when participants explained their reasons for participating in the project, they often started by talking about problems in their lives. These problems most often were related to work and unemployment, to ethnic discrimination, and to fatherhood (the men's wish to be good fathers). The men sometimes framed these issues in relation to structural inequalities and at other moments the men highlighted the specific individual backgrounds to their problems. The men also talked about problems with intimate relationships, but mostly only after being probed on this specific topic, while they often initiated the other topics themselves.

5.1.1 WORK, UNEMPLOYMENT, AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

Most of the participants I interviewed had working-class backgrounds and a low level of education. This education varied greatly, however: some men were illiterate, some had a few years of schooling, while others had finished lower vocational education. Most respondents had a history of low-skilled employment in construction, factories, cleaning, warehouses, or restaurants (except for three with higher education, who have had office jobs). Most of the men I interviewed were unemployed at the time of the interview. Some had worked for the same employer for 20 to 30 years before they became unemployed, others had had many different employers. The way participants explained and reflected on their unemployment varied between stoicism and a strong discontent about their situation. The way they experienced related

problems and the reasons they were unemployed also varied between seeing them as individual, structural, or combinations of the two.

Zakaria (65, Moroccan background), who had been unemployed for the last fifteen years, described the changes to the labour market since he came to the Netherlands:

> *Before, at that time of the guest labourers, in the 1970s, there was enough work: in construction, in the street, as road workers, in factories, building roads, bridges. (...) Nowadays, [there's] not much work. (...) Yeah, there is work, but only for people who have diplomas. Before, at a cleaning company, you didn't have a diploma. In construction, demolition, working with a wheelbarrow, mixing stones with cement: No diplomas. But now you need a diploma, that's the difference. (Zakaria)*

The quote shows how Zakaria understands his unemployment – and the unemployment of people who, like him, have little education – as the result of a decrease in low-skilled jobs. In the interview he also described that he had experienced a change in the way the Dutch state involved itself with him. When he had a job in manual labour, he said, he did not try to learn the Dutch language well, and no one expected this of him. He was not encouraged to get a diploma, he just worked. Zakaria also explains that, when he became unemployed, he at first did not receive much help to get back to work. After a while, the government became more involved in how he spent his days.

At the same time, it became even harder to get a job with no education. Being over 50, like he was at the time when he became unemployed, also made it difficult to find work in manual labour. And at one point he decided that his working days were over and that it was time for younger people to work. He started identifying as a man who had retired early, filling his days with visits to the mosque and the neighbourhood centre, where he meets other men with Moroccan backgrounds.

To some of the men, being unemployed, reflected negatively on the way they saw and talked about themselves. Hicham (64, Moroccan background) had been unemployed for 8 years at the time of the interview. He shows clear discomfort with not being able to work and he sees the work he did as "low":

> *I used to have low work: cleaning jobs, building jobs. In recent years, I had to get illness benefits because my back is worn out, plus all kinds of illnesses and all that. So, that's why. But I always say to my children: Don't look at me as an example, as a good example. [He repeats this three times in the interview.] My back is worn out and I have other problems with illness, but working is always good, because of course you are proud to earn your own bread, to make a living. People don't look at you like [he looks down, scowling]: Oh look, he just doesn't want to work. No, I think that's no good (...) For example, when you go to your child's school and they ask you: Where do you work, sir? No, I don't work [pauses and shakes his head]. I think it's difficult to say. If you work, you are like this [puts two*

> *thumbs up]. No, I go to the unemployment office [he shakes his head and scowls again]. (...) I'm ashamed of it. (Hicham)*

The quote shows how Hicham experiences pressure to work, both by his own norms and by the way others see and judge him. He feels he should be a role model to his children: a working man who puts bread on the table. Hicham in that sense fails to live up to this hegemonic masculinity norm of the breadwinner. To him, having "low work" is valued higher than having no work, even though his worn-out back gives him a good reason to be out of work.

Some men refer to their employment situation as being "disqualified" (*afgekeurd*). In the Netherlands, this widely used term describes a situation of being fully or partially declared medically unfit for work and therefore entitled to sickness benefits. However, the term also symbolically reflects their disadvantaged status.

Out of the 35 participants I interviewed, 11 had mental and/or physical health issues. This goes for older as well as the younger men, and for those with migrant backgrounds as well as non-migrants. While some had back problems, many had become unemployed due to a burnout or depression (Kees, Rachid, Fouad, Kostas, Hans), while others only started to become depressed after their unemployment, describing how they struggled with boredom and negative thoughts (Younes, Youssef, Ton). In the projects that focused more on fatherhood, there were fewer men with (mental) health problems and more men had a job. They participated because they wanted to improve their children's situation and that of children within their community (see also Case Study 2 in Chapter 3). That distinction between fatherhood programs and the rest of the projects, however, is not that clear cut, as some men participating in the fatherhood programs also had various multiple problems, including physical and mental health issues.

One of the respondents, Hans (white Dutch background), who took part in a project that focused on "participation", perceived the way employers responded to his illness as having a major effect on his health and personal life. For Hans, a 42-year-old former helpdesk operator, his problems started with a conflict at work, which resulted into a more stressful work situation and eventually a burnout. His employer's response to this illness made his situation worse. Hans sees the way problems developed not only as his individual problem, but also in "how it's all organized", which indicates that he sees his personal problems in relation to structural inequalities:

> *I don't agree with how it's all organized, especially in this country. I have great difficulty with the management layers (...) They earn four times as much as you, but they just sit on their fat asses. They do not improve the company, they just take the soul out of it. I experienced this five times at different companies (...). When I came back after my illness, it was the worst of all. They tried to get rid of me in a barbaric way. (...) When you don't function well, they don't try to support you, but try to demotivate you with nasty interrogations in a way that it breaks you, at such a large company, all the while you are sick and trying to recover. (Hans)*

The quote shows that, in Hans' perception, his problems are the result of "management layers" that are in control in a way that does not benefit their employees nor their work process. He felt there was injustice in the way labour relations were organized and the way companies responded to illness, putting their own financial wellbeing first.

The combination of unemployment and the hegemonic masculinity model of the breadwinner resulted in some of the men expressing strong emotions of frustration (like Hicham) and sometimes anger towards former employers (like Hans), but also towards people with whom they lost touch after their unemployment.

Sometimes unemployment and depression developed into situations in which respondents lost touch with family and friends, and experienced an extreme loss of control. Ton, a 57-year-old man (white Dutch background), also suffered a mix of problems after he was fired from the construction company where he had worked for 30 years. His tone, just like Hans, is angry: "They put together a file on me because they wanted to get rid of me. I was becoming too expensive." He felt there was injustice in the way he was treated after working for the company for 30 years, an important part of his life. After he was fired, Ton worked for someone who let him do all the work and in the end did not pay him. His financial problems escalated, and at one point he "gave up" and stopped paying his bills:

That's two years ago. You come home, and you already are in trouble, really, you come home, pull off your coat and think: I give up, I'm done. I'll see what happens. (Ton)

Ton slowly lost touch with not only his work environment but also his friends and family. At one point he entered a situation he calls "the crazy circle": eating unhealthily, staying up late, sleeping all day, not paying his bills, and, as he calls it, "living with the curtains closed". When he and his girlfriend (who also had problems) almost became homeless because they failed to pay their rent, he decided to look for help, which is how he got in contact with the welfare organization who also organized the project he was in. In other cases, unemployment triggered similar constellations of issues, although not always this extreme, (Youssef, Michel, Malek, Charley, Hans, Mahmut).

Although Hans deplored to the way companies and managers had treated him as an employee, he also experienced his unemployment as a personal failure. He found it very difficult to cope with the idea that he was not able to work because of his burnout, especially when everyone around him had a job: "You are the cause. The world keeps turning, everyone works." This experience of failure can be understood as not being able to live up to "good citizenship" virtues, as well as not being able to conform the hegemonic masculinity model of the breadwinner. Hans felt like he failed not only because of his own (masculinity) norms, but also because of the way people in his environment responded to his unemployment. His mother called him a "good-for-nothing", after which he broke off all contact with his family.

More respondents experienced rejection from people close to them. They also felt depressed, ashamed, or angry because of their unemployment situation. Problems with maintaining close relationships thus added to their unemployment and financial issues. These combinations of problems made the respondents' lives complex and difficult, and it was not

always clear where to start picking up the pieces. Feelings of a loss of control were often part of the narrative.

Some of the participants included negative experiences from their childhood in their narratives explaining these problematic situations before or at the time of the project.

Kees (32), who is from a white Dutch traveller family which has been in a disadvantaged position for generations (see also Case Study 3 in Chapter 3), said that his family, and the problems with which his family members are coping, make his life difficult. He explained that his family is discriminated against and that many family members had problems with addiction, which resulted in deaths in the family and problems with domestic violence. His father used to beat his mother, and she regularly ended up in hospital. Some family members, moreover, were involved in criminal activities. He argues that in his childhood these problems prevented him from doing well in school.

> *At one point I started skipping classes, I started being a pain. I always got punished, and in the third grade I stopped going altogether. (...) It was because of all the troubles that I didn't feel like doing anything. You think: School? Who cares? (Kees)*

Despite the negative experiences and his unsuccessful school career, Kees eventually learned to be a gardener and worked for several years. He was more successful at earning a living than many of his family members from his generation, who according to him mostly did not finish school and were unemployed from early on in their lives.

In other interviews, poverty-related problems in childhood were also part of the narratives around current problems. Some respondents talked about being (emotionally) neglected by their parents. Fouad (Moroccan background) relates his current depression to his poverty growing up with his single mother in Morocco. His father and sister died when he was young, and his mother received little support from family members, nor from other individuals or organizations.

> *It is difficult for me concentrate, you know. Maybe that is because of social problems (…) when I was young. My father died in 1961, and when I was a child my mother took care of us. (…) All bad things occurred at the same time: poverty, it was disorganized at home. She shouted at us: Do this, do that! Many problems. Because of these problems I got psychological problems and became depressed. I could not learn well in school. It was too loud in our house, no room to study, regularly no food to eat. That's why, because of these problems. (Fouad)*

The quote illustrates how poverty brought with it other kinds of trouble (hunger, poor living conditions, stress), which led to a continuation of problems later in life.

The narratives of the men show that the problems participants experienced were sometimes seen as individual misfortunes, but were also recognized within the context of structural inequalities concerning work situations, poverty, and marginalization, showing some understanding of their social locations, specifically their disadvantaged class positioning. At the same time, the men experienced problems due to not conforming to norms regarding what is expected of them as citizens or as men. As they did not conform to hegemonic masculinity norms of being participating citizens and breadwinners, this reflected negatively on their (male) identity and feelings of self-worth. Both respondents with migration backgrounds and those without experienced similarly negative experiences with being unemployed and poor. The next section shows how the men's experiences with ethnic discrimination intersected with other inequality dimensions.

5.1.2 Ethnic+ discrimination

Of the 35 participants I interviewed 7 talked about their experiences with discrimination, which they sometimes faced in combination with the problems with unemployment, feelings of exclusion, and poverty discussed above. Men with migration backgrounds experienced ethnic discrimination in applying for jobs, in every day contacts with (white Dutch) people, and in the way immigrants were portrayed in the media and especially by anti-immigration politicians. Besides limiting their possibilities, these experiences had negative consequences for their sense of belonging in the Netherlands and the way they saw themselves.

The most outspoken respondent about issues concerning discrimination was Abdel, an unemployed warehouse worker, who indicated that he had been applying for jobs for two years without success. He had someone who checked his applications for correct Dutch spelling, but suspected that he was still rejected because of his Moroccan background.

> *I'd bet money on it: if I would apply for a job, and you, for the same job, it doesn't matter what, the same, then I would know 1.000% certain, your letter would be chosen first, before the immigrants. They put them in the dustbin, because they don't want an Ahmed or an Abdel. (Abdel)*

Abdel compared his situation/social location to that of mine (white Dutch high-educated woman), portraying mine as the more privileged location. He later also compared his own location to that of white male former colleagues who, like him, lost their jobs because of cutbacks. While these former colleagues got a new job within a few months, Abdel had found nothing. According to him, discrimination occurs because there are people who see "Dutch people" as better than "Moroccans and Turks". He experienced these inequalities in his failed job applications as well as in his past contacts with white Dutch colleagues.

> *They push you a bit backwards (….) When you are a Moroccan or a Turk in [this town], then you..., they'd rather have a Dutch person. They see that as better than me… And pushing backwards means that they'd rather have a Dutchman than you for work, for everything. For drinking coffee when you have a break. If you are late, they get angry at you and not at him, you know… If you go for a smoke, they ask Kees to join them, not Abdel, you know? Things like that. It's not that easy to see, but… They won't tell you, they won't show you everything at once, but slowly, bit by bit. You don't show yourself as: "I'm a racist", no. It's with words, with other words they tell you, but what they mean is: "Go away!" (Abdel)*

The quote shows how experiences with discrimination in workplace interactions made him feel rejected both at work and in (local and Dutch) society. Abdel's experiences moreover made him pessimistic about his future and that of his children. He finds it difficult to find ways to deal with discrimination. The only thing he says he can do is: "Just keep on going, go along with it, live with it". According to him, the subtleties of discrimination make it difficult to respond. He expressed some hope for a better future for his children, but also expected that they would still have to deal with discrimination, drawing an image of a bleak future.

> *Maybe we are going to do the dirty work, and the good jobs? No, we can forget about those. (…) That's what I am afraid of. That is how I see it. (Abdel)*

In this quote, Abdel explains that he is afraid discrimination will become even stronger when there is a lack of openings on the labour market due to economic crisis, and that society will be strongly divided between white Dutch people and people like him and his family.

Another example of experiences with discrimination is offered by Charley, who has an Afro-Caribbean background. He moved from Curaçao to the Netherlands when he was 10. He explained that though he has always felt strongly attached to the Netherlands, because Curaçao used to be its colony and is still part of the Dutch kingdom, he is often denied jobs because of his physical appearance and his background. He often feels like he is "allochtonous" (a term used in the Netherlands for people with non-Dutch or non-European backgrounds, as explained in 2.3.1), because of the way others treat him and because of the way Antilleans and (other) immigrants are talked about in politics and the media.

> *We are born with a Dutch passport, but to be honest I– because of society, because of the system, I don't really feel like I'm Dutch, you know. I feel more like a..., that word, I don't know where it comes from, but an* allochtoon. *I feel I am an allochtoon, you know, but I should not feel that way. I should feel like a human being. But because of the system here, I get the feeling like: No, I am an "allochtoon", I am not a Dutchman, I am from*

> *Curaçao… But I do feel attached to the Netherlands. I know the culture, I know everything, from when I was young, but I still feel the apartheid of the 1950s [laughs]. I feel that somewhere, somewhere it's still there. Not with everyone, but with certain groups. If I look at the government, then you get: Am I welcome here? You know? I feel I am a bit excluded. (Charley)*

This quote shows how Charley identifies with a label that to him has a negative connotation, causing him to feel like an outsider and even dehumanized: "I should feel like a human being." He sees it as a result of subtle discrimination by the use of the term "allochtoon" and by a political situation in which many Dutch people vote for the populist anti-immigration PVV party, and in which other political parties were willing to work together with this party. This political situation affects his identity and his sense of belonging negatively.

To cope with discrimination and with external labels like "allochtoon", Charley explained he often surfs the internet for moral support. He has looked for information about colonial history and slavery, for example: "I really get my power from history (…) if people say white people are superior, or smarter... But if you know your history you understand the way the world works." Learning from history, he understood that inequalities are based in historically built structures of inequality. He furthermore explained that his religious (Christian) beliefs have taught him to forgive, noting that, although he sees the privileged positions of white people as originating from history, he also thinks it is important to realize these are not the same people as those who were involved in slavery. He also said that he does think it is important that there is better education about the colonial history of the Netherlands, to create more understanding about how Afro-Caribbean Dutch people are connected to the Netherlands through history.

The white men in the projects theoretically stand on the privileged side of inequality where their ethnicity is concerned. They can be expected not to be hampered by ethnic discrimination, though at least one group did. Although their discrimination is not based on physical appearance, nor on a history of colonialism and slavery, the members of traveller families were coping with similar problems, suffering from stigmatization and being locally discriminated against because of their family backgrounds.

As indicated in Case Study 3 (3.3), the young traveller men experience discrimination (Kees, Jan, Cheryl) when they look for jobs, as well as by the ways non-traveller members of the community see and treat them (and have treated their family members in the past) (Jan). At the same time, respondents with traveller backgrounds expressed hateful views about (other) ethnic minorities, specifically about people with Moroccan backgrounds. For Kees, this was a reason to vote for anti-immigration party PVV. In the interview, he even indicates that he "hates Moroccans", further explaining:

> *I don't like them. Every time on the news it is something with foreigners. I have been in many fights with foreigners, and they always complain, about this, about that, and that their own country is much better. Then I think: Go and live there then! And what I've seen as well, foreigners come and live here and they get a nice house, with furniture, and money and*

> *that. Here have a car! They get everything. And if you are in trouble as a Dutch person, you don't get anything, a kick in the butt and see where you land. That's how I think about it. (Kees)*

The quote shows that Kees feels that he is in competition with "foreigners", and that he feels neglected and/or more entitled to get help as a white Dutch man/person. Being part of a stigmatized group himself did not lead him to become an ally for another stigmatized group. By saying that "foreigners" should leave if they complain, he implied that these people belong less to the Netherlands than he does. Kees moreover explained that his dislike was fed by the way "foreigners" were portrayed in the media. His girlfriend Cheryl, who I interviewed as well, has a Turkish mother. She also said she hates "Moroccans", although she feels this might be changing. She explained that there used to be schoolyard fights with groups with different ethnic backgrounds, which fed her and her boyfriend's negative feelings. At the time of the interview she did not feel the same hate that she used to feel: "Now that I am older I think about it more." She also explained that she would not vote for the PVV like her boyfriend did because of her Turkish family (she does not identify as Turkish herself), believing that the party would be against them.

Three of the six white Dutch men I interviewed expressed negative opinions about immigrants or more specifically against people with Moroccan backgrounds, or said they had had such opinions in the past. Two of these men have at one point voted for the anti-immigration PVV party. In an interview, one respondent, Ton, claimed that he had voted for the PVV because he wanted "to give a signal" to politicians. He felt that politicians did not listen to citizens and that they needed a wake-up call:

> *T: I just want politics to change.*
>
> *I: But what would you like to see happening in politics?*
>
> *T: It should be like, if you work, normally, you should have a normal wage. That you have something to save or spend at the end of the month, even if it's only 50 Euros, but now the only thing you do is, you provide for another part of the population. And the ones who work have nothing. Really. With the euro it has gone down, and everyone gets poorer and poorer. And a billion goes to Afghanistan. Why are we in Afghanistan?*[51] *(…) It's just about oil and the politics of certain countries. We can't do anything about it as a small country. I just want to pay my bills smiling, and that has gone. That's what I want to happen. (Jan)*

The quote shows how voting for an anti-immigrant politician is interwoven with class inequality and discontent with the (left-wing) politicians who were expected to be on the working class' side. According to Jan, his vote for PVV was not a vote out of racism, but at the same time he

[51] Dutch troops have been involved in military operations in Afghanistan since 2002.

did vote for a party that is strongly anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim and not one that necessarily promotes policies that would make incomes more equal.

The way the participants discuss ethnic discrimination in interviews shows that, additional to problems with unemployment, (mental) health, loss of control, and poverty, some of the men feel that they are constrained by (future) employers because of their ethnic background, appearance, or last name. Discrimination on the labour market, subtle discrimination, colonial history (and ignoring colonial history in education), as well as negative media portrayals of immigrants all result in structural ethnic inequality and feelings of exclusion. Some men have developed their own ways to deal with these problems (e.g. Charleys' learning about colonial history). The men who are on the privileged side of ethnic inequality were concerned about their own disadvantaged (class) position and some were drawn to a Dutch anti-migrant and anti-Muslim party that challenged established parties and provided a scape-goat. In 5.3.2, I will discuss some changes in participants' views concerning "ethnic others". Next, I will discuss the way participants see their role in the family as fathers and in relationship with partners.

5.1.3 Fatherhood problems

A majority of respondents were fathers (24 out of 35). However, not all fathers had an active role in the parenting of their children. Of the 35 respondents, 14 had a partner and children living at home; 10 had children and were single. One of these was a co-parent. The other 9 single men with children did not have their children living with them, and two of these men had no contact with their children. In one case contact stopped because of a conflict with the mother and in another case after the ex-wife had a new partner, who made the father feel unwanted in the lives of his daughters.

Most of the respondents who did have children living at home participated in projects that had fatherhood as a central topic. Most men who participated in these fatherhood programs were migrant men. Single men (with and without children) participated more in projects that had a stronger focus on "participation", though in these projects raising children was often discussed as well.

Some of the men indicated that they saw problems with the ways they themselves had been raised and wanted to benefit from lessons about parenting, so they would be able to raise their children in "better" ways. Neighbourhood issues with youth on the streets were also a reason why some of the men participated in discussions about fatherhood. In those cases participants wanted to contribute to a discussion about parenting. In interviews, respondents talked about the strictness and sometimes violence of their own fathers, and I also saw such conversations in my participant observations.

Sener (Turkish background), who had lived in the Netherlands since he was a young child, explained that his father used to be very strict when he was raising Sener's older brothers, "like a dictator", but that his father changed when he got older and became milder in his parenting. Sener explained that he had a stronger bond with his father than his brothers. Still, it was for him hard to criticize his father. Compared to his own upbringing, he wanted to allow his daughters to be more "assertive", to prepare them for a society in which he believes one needs to be assertive. He also highlighted that societies were changing like this all over, in Turkey too.

This way he framed the change to encouraging assertiveness in children and specifically girls as a worldwide process, rather than as assimilating to Dutch society.

There were also men who said that children need more structure and discipline. For these men, the project was a way to discuss new tools to discipline children and teens. Azim (Moroccan background), for example, noted that there were children in the neighbourhood (with a large Moroccan immigrant population) who did not get any guidance, highlighting that this had consequences for young men and their masculinities.

> *The parents don't tell them anything. They just let them. If they come home at 3 in the morning, they just let them (...) They come home late and sleep until late, and they say: "I am the man". What man? [He puffs up his chest.] Where is the real man? [relaxes again] A real man is serious, is well behaved, human. He doesn't just think about himself, but also about other people. He does good things. (...) If you just go to clubs, talk to girls on the street, look for fights. If you ask him about it he says: "I am a man." Him, a man? Really? (Azim)*

According to Azim, children should be better taught how to behave, including how to be a man in less harmful ways. He does not see his own children as a problem (he has one young daughter), but more so the young men in the neighbourhood. The quote shows how he also sees a problem with masculinity: a "wrong" understanding of what it takes to be a man; young men who try to get respect by acting tough, "talking to girls in the street" and "looking for fights".

In interviews, the men expressed concern for both their sons and their daughters, but in different ways. Some fathers spoke proudly about their daughters' education, which was in many cases higher than their own, or when their daughters were younger they showed concern for their education (see also 4.1). This contrasts with the way these men were framed by professionals in Chapter 2, which showed that the men were framed as problematic for hampering the progress of their (wives and) daughters. Case Study 2 showed some more conservative views of a group of Muslim fathers.

The narratives about fatherhood show that the men were looking for new ways to be fathers – to be involved in their children's lives, to have a stronger bond with them, to discipline them in better ways – in order for their children (and those of others) to be successful in school and society. The interviews show that the men desire a specific type of fatherhood: some see themselves in the role of discipliners (in less authoritarian ways than their fathers) and not necessarily as (equal) caregivers besides the children's mothers.

5.1.4 Problems with relationships

In the interviews, I talked with the men about their relationships with partners, or ex-partners. Some talked in loving and open ways about their wives, girlfriends, or ex-partners, but there were also men who experienced difficulties in their relationships or found it a difficult topic to talk about. Of the 35 respondents, 18 had a partner, 14 of whom with children. Ten other men were single but had children, and therefore had to relate to an ex-partner. Two of these men did not have contact with the ex-partner, nor with the children.

Some of the men talked about relationship problems (also with ex-partners), for example disagreements about the way they should raise children (Youssef, Kostas, Azim, Ibrahim). They experienced trouble in their relationships because of different expectations about marriage, such as the way they would divide care and work tasks (Azim, Kostas, Mahmut, Khalid). Mahmut (Turkish background), for example, expected his wife to be the main caregiver, while she wanted to study to be a nurse. Azim and Kostas (Moroccan background and Greek background), on the other hand, had wives who expected the man to be the breadwinner while they stayed at home with the children. Azim and Kostas hoped for a more equal division, at least in order to have a higher family income. In Azim's case, the fights eventually resulted in a divorce. Sometimes psychological issues were behind the problems (Fouad, Mustafa, Kees), causing tensions and fights (Kees, Mustafa).

When respondents claimed that they saw their relationship as equal, this did not always mean it was equal in practice. Ashraf (Afghan background), for instance, said that he was willing to "help" with household tasks, but that there were certain things he could not do as a man, like cleaning a toilet, showing an inequality between men and women (Ashraf).

The way these relationship problems between partners would be characterized varied between "discussions" (Khalid) and "shouting" (Kotas, Azim), to more physical violence like smashing in an ex-partner's windows over a financial dispute (Ben) or a girlfriend's punching and scratching (Kees). There were also breakups and divorces, and respondents who lost contact with children because of problems communicating with their exes (Jan, Frank, Youssef). Two of these men re-established contact during or after the project (Jan, Youssef).

In 5.2.4, I will further discuss how the projects addressed intimate relationships, according to participants, how these interventions impacted on their relationships, and what the respondents saw as other possibilities to address gender (in)equality.

This analysis of my interviews has shown that the respondents faced many problems, though the severity of these varied greatly. In the men's perceptions, these problems were sometimes related to their structural unequal positions or their social locations, though respondents also indicated that such problems were sometimes caused by individual bad luck or because of their own choices. Some of the men felt rejected because they did not live up to hegemonic masculinity expectations (being strong, healthy, providing men). They also experienced being treated unjustly, and others looking down on them and not treating them with respect. Ethnic discrimination, furthermore, offered (migrant) men even less possibilities to improve their lives compared to white Dutch men and women. These lower chances as well as subtle forms of discrimination caused some of the men to feel rejected from the society in which they lived. For some of the white men, their feelings of being excluded, their declining financial situation,

and/or hatred towards immigrants were reasons to vote for the anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and anti-establishment PVV party.

The respondents' narratives about fatherhood showed that some of them had experienced problems in the way they had been raised, which made them want to reflect on how to be a good father. In neighbourhoods with loitering youth, fathers were searching for disciplining strategies, while they also wanted to be actively involved in parenting and learn (less strict) parenting skills. The emphasis on a disciplining role as fathers can be seen as a reproduction as well as a transformation of hegemonic masculinity: though their main role remained that of discipliner, they were looking for less authoritative ways to do so. And though some respondents described problems and inequalities in intimate relationships, this was not the reason they participated in the projects. Their reasons to participate were to improve their own disadvantaged locations and/or that of their children by becoming better fathers.

5.2 PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES ON PROBLEMS COMPARED TO THE PROBLEMS ARTICULATED BY PROFESSIONALS

The participants' perceptions of their problems mostly align with the social isolation-participation nexus which was present in the professionals' framing as well (see 2.2.2). The interviewed men, too, described their lives in terms of non-conforming to participation norms and saw this as problematic for their own well-being. Participants, however, portrayed their own lives in much more complex and differentiated ways. Some had very severe problems, some less so. Some men highlighted their own role in how problems developed, while others accentuated structural inequalities (disadvantaged family backgrounds, exploitative labour relations) or, more specifically, unfair ways they had been treated by employers. Compared to professionals' framing, there was more focus on the structural inequalities and disadvantaged class locations that led to their hardships.

Participants with migrant backgrounds framed discrimination or racism as a more central problem than professionals. Participants sometimes felt a sense of non-belonging or failure because they were unemployed and felt discriminated against, which professionals did also frame as problematic. The men, however, highlighted "real" or "lived" experiences with discrimination, whether by being rejected for jobs based on ethnicity/race or more subtle forms of discrimination, while professionals emphasized general feelings of rejection, sometimes without acknowledging these lived experiences.

Disadvantaged family backgrounds and childhood misfortunes were an important part of the participants' narratives, including men's relationships with their fathers, who were often framed as distant or authoritarian. These men desired a closer and more negotiating relation with their own children while still being able to discipline their children. To some, finding new and better ways to discipline was central to their desire to participate in the projects. There were also men who highlighted that they wanted to influence other men to raise their children better or to be able to address loitering young men in their neighbourhood. The problematization of distant and authoritarian fatherhood was also part of the framing of professionals, who included this in how they framed "traditional values". Professionals, however, made it seem that the fathers

themselves required an intervention as they were stereotypically "traditional" in this sense. The interviews pointed more to the fact that such relationships were already changing, and that fathers were looking for (and already had) less distant relationships with their children and new ways to discipline. The men therefore saw the projects as a tool rather than as an intervention that was trying to change them from "traditional" to "modern" or emancipated.

Some respondents connected their understanding of masculinity, in terms of what it means to be a man, to the way they framed problems, for example in their shame for not being able to provide for their family as an unemployed man, or by complaining that other (young) men saw acting tough, harassing girls in the street, and looking for fights as a way to be a man. Some of the professionals saw such gendered backgrounds to social problems as well, which shows that there was a shared gendered understanding of social problems, especially where it concerned the way masculinity could be harmful for the men themselves and their surroundings.

Compared to the professionals, participants reflected less on their own privilege, or on the way they hampered women in their lives, whereas this was a central part of the projects' framing, at least at the start of the projects. Gender inequality was much less part of the way participants saw problems in their lives than their unemployment situation, how they were discriminated against, or their role as fathers. When asked about their relationships some participants did indicate that they had (or had had) problems in their relationships, including problems over who decides on a woman's career choices and problems with violence (I will discuss this more in 5.2.4). Most participants, however, did not see this as a reason to participate in the project. Furthermore, the interviews (and observations, see 4.1) showed how men were concerned with the wellbeing of their daughters and were proud of daughters who had a higher education than them, which opposes the view expressed by professionals that (Muslim) men were hampering the progress of the daughters (again, Case Study 2 showed Muslim fathers with some more conservative views).

Altogether, there was much overlap in the professionals' and participants' framings, with subtle but important differences. The most important discrepancy was that the problem of "traditional behaviour and values" regarding gender equality was framed as problematic by professionals, while it was hardly relevant to most participants.

5.3 Participants' perspectives on the interventions and their impact

Now that we have closely looked at the way participants experienced inequality and related problems in their lives, I will discuss how the participants felt these interventions addressed the four dimensions of problems indicated in section 5.1.

5.3.1 (Back to) normality: daily rhythm, social contacts, and improving educational and employment opportunities

The participants saw the projects as interventions that helped them solve some of the problems indicated above: unemployment, feeling excluded, financial problems, and problems with

parenting or with neighbourhood youth. As said, none of the participants indicated their reason for joining a group was to improve their relationships with women, or gender equality in general. Sometimes men did not have a clear idea of what the project would be about when they joined the group. Their first visit was to try it out, and they stayed because they enjoyed the company, the activities, and/or the help and education they received or were able to offer.

For the unemployed respondents, the interventions were a way to become more active, to "get out of the house", and to be around people again. Some of the men explained that their unemployment had led to feelings of boredom and/or depression, and that the project helped them get out of a situation in which they experienced a lack of things to do.

To Charley (Afro-Caribbean background), for instance, the project functioned as a way to get structure in his weekdays, to get away from a life behind closed doors, and to get help finding work. He argued that he was looking for help writing job application letters, because in regular labour reintegration programs he was put behind a computer without any further guidance. In the male-emancipation project, according to him, the contact with the professionals was more intensive and personal, which kept him motivated to participate.

> *[It was] to motivate yourself, to stand up for problems we deal with, and to gain some strength (…) I think it's good for me. Look, before this, I did not do much, you see. I did go to my family. I'm glad I have my family, I have brothers and sisters and so on. So I went to see them, but that was it, you know. So now I have: You do this, you do that [the project organizes activities like nature walks and sports activities, besides meetings in a neighbourhood centre]. So you are doing things and you wake up earlier. Not very early, but earlier. [The program starts at 10 AM]. If I have nothing to do I wake up at ten, eleven, maybe twelve at the latest, you know, but if you do this, you have something to do. Otherwise you don't have much to do. You are at home, and sometimes you don't even leave the house. You are home all day. (Charley)*

For Charley, the project was a way to be more physically active, to see more people, and to have a more structured daily rhythm. Additionally, he hoped to learn to get better at applying for jobs and to develop his computer skills.

To Mark (white Dutch background), who participated in a project for unemployed men that combined sports activities with meetings, the male-emancipation project offered him the feeling that he had more control over his life and that he was not just doing what others told him to do. He favourably compared the project with mandatory reintegration programs in which he had previously participated, which had made him feel even more rejected and less powerful (O7-2).

> *I hate it when people point their finger at me and tell me what to do, I have too many experiences with authorities doing that, if there's someone who points their finger, it's me. (O7-2)*

In the interview, as can be seen in the quote above, Mark expressed anger with his former employers, as well as the authorities who tried to get him back to work. The experiences in the project offered him more control over his own life.

To some participants, becoming more active included participating in volunteer work or developing other activities besides the project meetings. Of the 35 respondents, 15 started to do volunteer work during or after the project, 3 men started doing computer courses (and many more I have seen participating in such courses during observations in Case Study 1). Muhammed, a young man with a refugee background from Somalia, was introduced to, and enrolled in, an educational program in social work because of the project and was eventually hired by the organization behind the project.

I had nothing to do (…) I watched television, had no social contacts (…) In the project, I got information about Dutch society, about how I could continue my education and how I could look further. (…) In the third meeting, we discussed: How can we get ahead? How can we find a job? Who wants to study? How can we get more information? (…) I told them I want to study, when I'm finished with learning the language, and [the professional] later told me they could arrange something with the municipality and [the organization]. And now I go to school one day a week and I am an intern at [the organization] three days a week. (Muhammad)

The steps Muhammed was able to take in his education and in finding work were beyond many other participants. He explained that it had been easier to take these steps because he was already able to speak English, which made it easier to learn Dutch. In my observations, I also saw that men who were more educated got ahead faster (O1-1). This was the case for the volunteers in the project whose voluntary jobs developed into temporary paid employment as well (Case Studies 1 and 2).

Besides having something to do during the day, getting a more structured daily rhythm, making plans for the future, and getting an education, simply regaining contact with people or with "society" (breaking social isolation) were what participants saw as important aspects of the projects.

For Hans, "regaining contact with society" was the most important reason to participate. He had lost touch with family, friends, and girlfriend after becoming unemployed. Building on a relationship with a group of men in a (semi-)public environment was easier and more important at this stage of his life than, for instance, getting in touch with family or old friends, although he did also make his first steps to have contact with his family again.

I have my contacts here, and other than that (…) I am still as alone as before (...), but that is what I want. (...) What I have here is enough, the people who I see here, with whom I do things here in the centre, or within the project. More than that I don't need. (…) I don't

> *have contacts like, it's not like we visit each other at home or something, but that is not what I'm looking for, but I do want to feel connected to society again and all that (...) I did get back in touch with my family, that was my own decision. (...) I went over and reached out, but other than that it's alright with me. I mean, I've had difficult times and then you see who are there for you, and if that happens not to be your family, then, well, that's it. Too bad. But you don't forget that. I've become very careful, because I need to have that feeling of trust back first. (Hans)*

Within the project, Hans had a type of contact with other participants that felt safe to him. As he did not feel dependent on them, it would be less hurtful to lose them. The quote also shows that Hans emphasizes his own agency. It was his choice to only have contact with people within the project and it was his choice to reach out to his family: "That was my own decision." He set the boundaries in his contacts with people, which gives him the feeling that he is in control of his life again. His emphasis on choice and control can be seen as a way to access a stronger (masculine) identity, despite all setbacks.

To recap, participants experienced the projects as having had the following impacts: they found ways to have more structure, more daily activities, more social contacts, and more perspectives for future improvement. Some men found employment or a decent perspective on gaining some. The projects offered the men contacts and skills that let them improve their situation, have more contact with people, and have more control over their own lives, improving their (individual) social locations but also increasing their sense of belonging. Some respondents contrasted the projects to (other) reintegration programs, criticizing the latter for offering little guidance and taking away control – based on the way respondents described them, these other programs were normalizing, constraining, and emotionally disempowering. Participants believed professional guidance was necessary to motivate them and teach them the skills they needed. The projects helped them structure their days in a way that offered them knowledge and skills, as well as feelings of strength and belonging. This way, the projects were at the same time normalizing and enabling: Though the men were involved in activities that encouraged them to have more conformist lifestyles, the interventions at the same time gave them a sense of belonging, more control over their lives, and more possibilities to do what they wanted.

5.3.2 (Not) opposing discrimination and familiarizing in a diverse society

The projects were not experienced as interventions that were intended to find solutions for ethnic discrimination. Respondents explained how they discussed the issue in the projects, but they did not mention how the interventions helped them to oppose or defend themselves from discrimination.

The projects did help some of the men learn about "different cultures" or get more familiar with them (Albert, Hans, Youssef, George, Charley). This was true for men with

migration backgrounds as well as white Dutch men. Heterogeneous groups "familiarized" the men with others from different backgrounds, while homogeneous groups offered the men a possibility to collectively find a way to feel empowered in a society in which they (sometimes) felt alienated.

George, who has a Surinamese Afro-Caribbean background, explained that he sometimes felt uncomfortable with people from many different backgrounds in the city, and it felt better to get to know people from different backgrounds (O18-10; a participant in O13-1 made the same argument). Hans (white Dutch) found that the project made him feel more at ease with people "with another background", with whom he had previously felt less comfortable. In his project, the group consisted of migrant men from many different backgrounds, as well as some white Dutch men. Hans predominantly saw himself as "helping" the migrant men by explaining Dutch society, thus finding a meaningful role for himself in a project with a mixed group of participants. The following quote shows how Hans saw the project as familiarizing him with people he used to see in a more negative light.

I: Did the project make you think differently about this [the negative ideas he had about immigrants]? Did it change your ideas?

H: Well, yes, it's the experiences, right? That's what does it, if you have little experience (…) with other cultures, and all that [and] because of these meetings, you get that. You notice that they are all people who want to participate, who want a job and maybe a family, and that they have goals in life and are doing all sorts of things in order to get there, despite all the ways in which they are hindered here in this country and all. It gives you respect for them, and if they are nice to you and polite and are receptive to your ideas... (Hans)

Hans explained that, more than arguments or words, it was positive experiences that made him feel connected to people with different ethnic backgrounds. Negative experiences with what he calls "foreigners" in his employment situation had had the opposite effect in the past: "My aversion was quite big at a certain point." In the project, he realized that men with immigrant backgrounds are (also) trying their best to improve their lives. Though he now thinks the "bar" is often put too high for immigrants, he also puts up some bars by highlighting the need for migrants to speak Dutch, be polite, and be "receptive to his ideas". His relationship with the migrant men was in that sense positive to him as long as they listened to him and helped him play a meaningful role, which kept him in a more privileged position, offered him a higher status (or identity), and made him arbiter of social norms.

Participants of more homogenous groups also argued that such a group had benefits for them. Muhammed, a participant of a relatively homogenous project for men with Somali backgrounds, explained that it helped that they spoke the same language and that they understood each other's histories as they had had similar experiences with differences in culture between their country of origin and the Netherlands (despite coming from different ethnic backgrounds in Somalia). He explained that, besides the project, he also participated in a civic integration course with people from different backgrounds, but that there the contacts remained

more shallow. According to him that was mainly due to the fact that he had to sit behind a computer to practice multiple-choice questions for the civic integration test, which offered little opportunity for interaction. Learning Dutch and meeting people with other backgrounds was also important, but to him the one does not exclude the other. Within the project he met people with Somali backgrounds, which helped him get out of an isolated situation. After being guided towards an educational program within the project, he had access to schooling (a vocational training in social work) with people from many different backgrounds, which gave him a stronger sense of home in a country with people from many different backgrounds. In Muhammad's case, his feelings of belonging were built through contact with migrant men of similar backgrounds, as well as through mingling with people from different (migrant) backgrounds. This offers an alternative perspective on integration, which is usually seen as integrating immigrants into "Dutch society" in a way that represents both immigrants as well as "Dutch society" as falsely homogeneous.

In conclusion, the interviews (and some observations) show how familiarizing with "different cultures" was one of the ways in which the men created a stronger sense of belonging, especially in diverse cities where some felt alienated. Human contact in heterogeneous or homogenous groups can be a way to improve (feelings of) belonging in a diverse society. Homogenous (male) immigrant groups had the benefit of making participants feel stronger and more at home within their group and local ethnic community, while heterogeneous groups let the men feel more at ease with diversity. To some of the participants (particularly white Dutch men), this "familiarizing" formed an important impact of the project, especially when they had previously had little contact with people outside of their own ethnic group and felt alienated. However, despite their worries about ethnic discrimination for themselves and future generations, and their interest in learning more about ethnic inequality and the colonial past (see 5.1.2), the participants noticed hardly any enabling attention for these issues in the projects. The practices concerning local ethnic groups did not go beyond talking about issues with discrimination and familiarizing men from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (including white Dutch men).

5.3.3 Changing Fatherhood: parenting and pacified masculinity

Because some projects revolved around fatherhood, the men in these programs shared similar reasons for participating: to talk about fatherhood and about solving parenting problems. Fatherhood proved to be an accessible topic for fathers as well as for some men who did not have children. Some explained they were struggling with how to be a good father. When they reflected on how they were raised by their own fathers, some saw a need for change. These men explained that though they had already started to do things differently before the project, the projects did influence them as well.

What the men wanted to change varied between being less strict, being more strict, or disciplining their children differently. In any case, men found it important to be more involved. In the interviews, the men's views on parenting often reflected what I heard from trainers in educational meetings on parenting: they especially wanted to develop stronger bonds at an earlier age, and be involved in their children's daily activities and school work.

Sener, for instance, recognized that the project changed him as a father. He explained that the project helped him be more conscious about being a father and spend more time with his two daughters. He used to focus on his job and hardly "enjoyed" being with his family. The project changed that.

I started to do more things with my children. Not because I had to, but because I wanted to. That change has been huge. (…) It is now normal for me to put the children to bed. (Sener)

The project made Sener realize that he wanted to be more involved in the lives of his children. The quote also shows how he emphasized that he chose to make changes himself. He did not change because someone told him to: "Not because I had to, but because I wanted to". At the end of the interview, which took place in his house, his wife joined us and explained that she saw that her husband enjoyed being with his children more since the project and therefore enjoyed life more, instead of just being focused on work.

Ahmed explained that, over the course of the project, he showed more interest in his children and asked them to spend time with him. When he asked if they wanted to go to a theme park or a zoo, this caused some surprised reactions, and he laughed as he told me: "At home there is a certain system for years and when you try something different you get: Daddy, what's wrong with you?".

There were also men who wanted to improve the way other people raised their children (Younes, Ahmed). Ahmed started commenting on the way men close to him raised their children.

For example: two brothers of my wife. They have children. They are born here, the brothers of my wife, but their children are very naughty, really, but if I'm at their house, if I see the children, with their mother, for example, she says: "You have to be quiet." And so on, and then the father comes and he says: "Oh, that's alright, just let them." The father says it's alright, but the mother says it isn't! That's when I said: "What are you doing? That's a big mistake: If their mother says they can't, don't say they can. You have to say: Your mother's right." (Ahmed)

In this quote, Ahmed not only showed what he learned in the group – that parents should give their children a consistent message – he also backed up his sister in-law and her parenting decisions. It shows how convinced he is of the importance of the project's lessons that he passes them on to men in his surroundings, in this case family members. It is hard to determine just how far such projects reach beyond the individual participants, but in this rare case it showed that what was discussed in the projects travelled beyond the participants' group or family situation.

To recap, in the experience of fatherhood-project participants these interventions helped them to be more involved fathers and/or to address fatherhood in the community. The projects helped men reflect on the way they themselves were raised, making them more conscious of the kind of father they wanted to be. These fathers were looking for a different way to discipline children, but in ways that were not just strict, distant, or even violent, thus transforming a hegemonic masculinity in their lives. Importantly, the men indicated that they themselves wanted to make these choices in order to improve their children's situation, or the situation in the neighbourhood.

Some men also indicated they had discussed differences in the way they raised boys and girls, which I will discuss in the next section on the men's experiences with discussing gender equality and/or intimate relationships.

5.3.4 Discussing gender equality

According to many respondents, there were few (if any) conversations about intimate relationships, the division of care and work, or gender in general during the project. After some early interviews, I therefore decided to ask what respondents would think of such conversations, in order to find out whether there actually were more possibilities for such conversations than the professionals had expected, whether the participants felt these were topics that could and should be discussed. In this section I will first show how participants who did have conversations about gender within the projects perceived these conversations and their impact. Afterwards I will discuss whether the other participants I interviewed believed such conversations would be possible and/or necessary.

Experiences with discussing gender equality and gender difference in the project

According to 15 of the 35 respondents, they briefly discussed gender equality, or more specifically relationships between men and women or parenting sons and daughters. In only some cases (8) did the men talk about gender equality in a way that made them think differently about inequality or difference, or that made them change something in their lives (6 of these 8 concerned Muslim men with Moroccan, Turkish, or Somali backgrounds).

According to Muhammad (Somali background), the project's discussions about intimate relationships between men and women started when the group discussed differences in culture between the Netherlands and Somalia. Muhammad said that men who had migrated from Somalia in the 1990s (because of the civil war) would explain such differences to men who had migrated more recently (like himself). One of these differences, ,according to these men, was the position of the man in the family.

We have talked about, in Somalia, the men were the head of the family. They say what women should do: Do this, do that! Women were always at home, like that. And here [in

> *the Netherlands] everyone decides for themselves, their own responsibility. That's why we see a difference. (Muhammed)*

In Muhammad's experience, the project offered a space to discuss relationships between men and women. He learned that in the Netherlands women do not only stay home and that men and women have a more equal division of work and care. When asked his opinion about these differences, Muhammad explained that after these conversations he sees more equality as something positive: "If your wife works, or studies, that is good for you as well. You can both work and study, and you can make a living." Muhammad sees it an advantage for men and for the family when women (also) work, enabling a "better life" compared to when only the man works. In other interviews (and in my observations), men also highlighted that it is easier or necessary for both men and women to work, not necessarily to ensure equality, but because of the economic advantages (O22-2; Abdel; Nordin). Participants argued that in economically difficult times both men and women need to work to make a living. The wellbeing or empowerment of women was not articulated as a reason.

Mahmut (38, Turkish background) said he had discussed the way he divided work and care tasks with his wife in the project. In his case, these conversations happened one on one with a professional. The professional from the project (female with Turkish background), who also knows his wife, introduced him to a social worker who monitored the way he and his wife raised their daughters. According to Mahmut, the social worker was needed because he did not have a good "bond" with his children and was very strict with them. He and his wife argued a lot, and at one point one of their daughters refused to return home after visiting her grandparents. The fights with his wife were about his wife taking classes and working, while he wanted her to be at home more: "I said, I don't want you to continue your studies, because I never see you anymore.".

According to him, his wife refused to stop her education and argued that he should contribute more to household work, especially because she was working and he was not. Mahmut explained that he spent a lot of time sleeping, because he had nothing to do during the day. After discussing his problems with professionals, he decided to make some changes.

> *They said: Come on, you should let her learn, that's better for her. I said: That is easy for you to say; I almost never see her. She comes home and goes to sleep at nine, and if she isn't asleep she is behind the computer or doing homework with a friend. But yeah, if it will be better for her, I don't have anything to say about it actually. So let's do it then, let's see how far she gets. We'll see. (Mahmut)*

In the end, Mahmut was (reluctantly) convinced to let his wife continue her education and started to do more household tasks. Because of the help he got from the project's social worker, he started to do volunteer work in the morning to get more "structure" in his own life and he had the feeling that he had "things back on track" (Mahmut).

Another way of discussing gender was by discussing differences in raising boys and girls. Nordin (22), part of a fatherhood program with participants from Moroccan backgrounds (Case Study 2), but not a father himself, said that the men talked about differences between raising sons and daughters in the project. According to him, fathers in the Moroccan community are more "protective" of their daughters than of their sons. He indicated that they talked about the idea that girls and boys should be raised equally according to Islam.

> *Last week it was about boys and girls and how you raise a boy and how you raise a girl. And with most [participants] it was that boys get more freedom than girls, but afterwards it was said that, how it is in Islam is that girls and boys have the same rights. So it is really just the culture. It's not religion. (…) It's something that is passed on, something like that, tradition. (Nordin)*

As Nordin explained, the professionals (with Moroccan and Muslim backgrounds) tried to find space for gender equality within the participants' cultural and religious context. They asked an imam to look for references in the Koran and in accounts about the life of prophet Mohammed in order to create space for (more) equality. Nordin highlighted that change is possible within the Islamic context. Discussions in the project made him reflect on more equal roles for men and women:

> *I think it's possible to discuss that, that the man also does some chores in the house, that it should just be like that and that it is possible, because with religion, it's also true that the prophet (…) did chores in the house. (...) He helped the women. He not only put bread on the table. (Nordin)*

The use of religion in advocating gender equality shows how complex religious texts are and that many interpretations are possible. There are limits, of course, to the texts, but there is also space to work towards more gender equality. The quote indicates that, as the prophet himself had "helped", Nordin believed that he too would be fine with doing "some chores". Although more equal than having strict separate roles, he does not sketch a picture of gender equal roles. The direction for change Nordin describes interestingly matches the dominant "1.5 breadwinner" model in the Netherlands rather than a model in which men and women divide tasks equally (see Chapter 2; Lewis 2001; Ciccia & Verloo 2012).

Besides conversations about the division of paid work and household tasks, some men discussed conflicts with wives or girlfriends in the groups. In an interview, Khalid (Moroccan background) talked about small fights he sometimes had with his wife. He says that it is important to talk about problems in a calm way.

> *Sometimes she gets mad at me, and then: "Why are you so angry with me?" We joke around sometimes: "What have I done to you?" [in a higher pitch:] "You are late. You didn't do the groceries. Where were you? Where did you go so late? You've stayed there until too late. [In his regular voice:] What do you want from me? You expect me to fly? [laughs] So just talking quietly and negotiating. Just very normal. For me it's normal to talk about these things. (Khalid)*

The scene that Khalid sketches reflected the issues that were discussed in the project, such as the division of household tasks and how to talk in a negotiating way within the family. The quote furthermore shows how Khalid presents himself and his wife as a "normal" couple that occasionally has fights, but in a way that according to him is calm, negotiating, and humorous. He seems to want to oppose another image. Maybe he expected that I assumed they had an unequal relationship, because of existing prejudices about migrant or Muslim couples.

Ton (white Dutch background) described a discussion about gender, more specifically the differences between men and women. The men in the project were given a list of such differences (the codes of masculinity that were discussed in 4.2.1. S4) and were asked whether they recognized the differences and whether they could add more. Ton said that he agreed with the presented differences, and in the group there was some discussion, as some did not agree with all of them. At home, Ton talked over the differences with his girlfriend, and according to him they both agreed with some of the points from the list. It made him realize that he could do some things differently. He explained that he sometimes found it hard to listen to his girlfriend when she was talking. In the project, women were depicted as more talkative than men and men as bad listeners. Even though this was a problematic and stereotypical view of gender differences, it did make him reflect on his behaviour, as he saw that he could improve his listening skills.

Besides talking about gender equality and difference there were activities aimed at gender equality, such as cooking classes. Of the men who had taken cooking classes that I talked to, Muhammed (Somali background, married, but living alone in the Netherlands) indicated that he liked the idea of dividing tasks equally and to also cook within his marriage. Rick (white Dutch background) explained that he did not understand why they had a cooking activity within a project in which they learned to be an activity leader (see also Case Study 3). To him, the discussions about household roles which were part of the cooking activity were unnecessary and annoying. In the same group, other participants also thought that cooking did not fit the program. Though some saw it as a nice social activity, the interviews show, at least in this group, that the connection between cooking and a more equal division of household tasks was not explicitly made.

In conclusion, some respondents had conversations about gender within the projects, more specifically about intimate relationships, and some felt that these conversations and practices had impacted on their lives: They now desired, or had, a more equal division of tasks in the household and/or wanted to raise sons and daughters equally. Many other men did not see such an impact, did not notice that their project were (also) about gender equality or relationships, or

did not appreciate it when they were. Although the participants experienced only a very limited impact, the changes they did perceive can be expected to have some enabling impact for women. In the next section I will discuss how participants talked about possibilities to discuss gender equality.

Between private and public lives: Grey areas of what can be discussed with others

As said, not all participants noticed that gender, intimate relationships, or raisings boys and girls were topics of discussion in the projects, even when I had noticed that the topic had been "slipped in" to meetings about other topics. I asked some of the men if it would be possible or necessary to discuss gender equality – to talk about differences and similarities between men and women, about how to be men, or about intimate relationships. Most men related their answers to their own intimate relationships.

Some men felt that "other participants" found it difficult to discuss such topics. Khalid (Moroccan background) remembers talking about his relationship with his wife and about way they solved conflicts in the project. To him, it was "normal" to talk about his wife with the group, but he also saw that other men found it more difficult to do so.

There are a lot of people who are very closed off. They keep everything inside. That's wrong, that's how I see it. Because it is normal to talk about your wife, at your job or in the group. It means you are happy with your wife, that she's doing something you like. And I really like to tell other people about her. I really like that. Women do that as well about their husbands. They like to talk about their husbands, and that's how I think about it as well. I have worked with many women and they talk about their men. That way you learn more. (Khalid)

Khalid claimed that it would be better if the other men overcame their difficulty in talking about relationships. The benefits according to him would be that men would "learn" more about relationships. It is worth noting he uses the term "normal" to say it is good to be "open" about your relationship without connecting it to a cultural, ethnic, or gendered "normality", thus normalizing this "openness" as a non-culturalized accepted way to act.

Abdel (Moroccan background) also indicated that there were other participants (with Moroccan backgrounds) who would not want to discuss intimate relationships.

Abdel: Some do not want to talk about it, others do not mind so much, others would rather not.

I: Ok, and what do you think about it yourself?

Abdel: I do not mind so much. I have nothing to hide.

I: But do you not mind talking about it, or do think it is a good thing to talk about it?

Abdel: If they would ask me about it, I would answer. It depends on the question, but I do not have a problem with that. If they ask, I will answer.

I: But why would you talk about it?

Abdel: If the people think it's a good topic and it is part of the training, sure.

Abdel clearly does not express a strong need to discuss gender relations. He is open to discussing the topic, whereas according to him other men are not. He would put his trust in the professionals, who he expects would bring up relevant topics. The project was important to him because of his good relationship with the trainer and the other participants, so he is willing to go along.

To Kees (white traveller background), discussing gender equality within the group, and more specifically the topic of domestic violence, would be a relevant issue to discuss. He especially saw it as a problem for his parents' generation, but there was also trouble with young men beating up their girlfriends among the younger generations. To discuss these issues with the older men from the community would be impossible, according to him: "They would not even listen, and if you say something they get very angry. It's just not an option. It's just the way it is actually, yeah, that's very difficult." For the younger generation, however, he saw a possibility and a need to discuss domestic violence. In his own relationship he did not use physical violence, he said, because he had experienced it too much when he was young, but he did see a lot of violence towards women among his peers.

According to Samir (Moroccan background), there would be resistance to talk about private topics like intimate relationships within the Dutch-Moroccan community – he specifically mentioned first-generation migrants – because of feelings of "shame", but he also saw some possibilities. Samir explained that the best way to talk about these topics would be to work around the embarrassment by talking about practical issues such as parenting and slowly get the men used to talking about more private issues. He explained how he experienced this in talking about his own wife.

S: If you talk about what I do with my wife, I cannot talk about everything. About some things I can, about the kitchen, what I do, but not about everything, (…) like emotional things, that is hard to talk about, but I can talk about: Do I help my wife? Do you help your wife? (…) People try to not let you look into their private issues. With emancipated people, you can talk. (…) Dutch people can talk about everything. They are emancipated. Moroccans cannot talk about everything, they have secrets, privacy, they cannot, but it is good for the men. What is the good way to do it? What do you do in the kitchen and why? I think you shouldn't ask it directly like that, but use it like (…) Look, how you should do, how you can help your wife in the kitchen? Do you help your wife? No? Why? It is like it

> *is. People are raised in a way and used to it. Don't tell them what they should or should not do. (….) Maybe then slowly ... Give an example, tell them something you did,* then *he can tell you. (…) You have to start off easy to involve men in these activities, maybe it is possible, (…) but not all at once. (Samir)*

This quote shows that Samir believes men should not be pushed to discuss gender equality issues. He specifically talked about men with Moroccan backgrounds, stereotypically contrasting them to "emancipated" (white) Dutch people. The quote also shows how Samir does see "ways in" to talk about relationships or other gender equality issues (with men with Moroccan backgrounds): to address practical issues in the household, to talk about issues in general terms, or to let professionals use their own situations as examples.

The way Samir addresses what can and what cannot be talked about with others relates to the projects' practices and what professionals believe to be the limits of what can be discussed. It is thus comparable to "tiptoeing around" the topic of gender equality and discussing gender equality via other topics (S2) and via personal stories (S9) (both strategies were discussed in Chapter 4). So, to some extent there is a fit between the sensitivities of some participants and the strategies professionals followed.

There were also some men who were against discussing gender or relationships because they thought it to be too far off topic and/or too private. Ben (white Dutch), who participated in the project where the men were taught to be activity leaders for children, does not see gender, gender equality, or intimate relationships as topics that would fit the project, nor as things that should be discussed with others.

> *I don't know, I think it would be more of a topic to talk about what happens if children have a conflict with each other, if you are organizing a game (…) What everyone does in their relationship is their business, I think. I'm not that bothered by it. (Ben)*

The quote shows that Ben sees the project as having a different goal, one that does not relate to discussing gender equality or relationships (the official one of organizing games for children, see Case Study 3). In the interview, Ben does discuss issues he had with his ex-girlfriend, for example, violent outbursts over money issues, for which he had to go to court (over smashing the windows of his ex-girlfriend's house). His remark about what would be "more of a topic" in the project shows what the result is of having different frontstage and backstage goals – goals that are not openly discussed with participants. Because gender equality or relationships are not presented to participants as important topics within the project, bringing up such topics later is strange and seems to not fit the program. Because of the backstage-frontage discrepancy, not being open about the gender equality goals renders it difficult to make gender equality a relevant topic of discussion in practice (see also section 3.4).

To recap, some men, when asked, saw possibilities for, and a need to, talk about gender equality, while others did not. Specifically, parenting and the division of care and work were topics that could be discussed. Violence against women was seen as very difficult to discuss, yet necessary in a case in which someone had experienced the negative consequences of being raised in a violent environment. The men expected such conversations to be difficult, because some topics were seen as private or irrelevant, or because men would not want to be pushed to change. What men suggested were careful "tiptoeing" strategies, similar to what the projects were already doing.

5.4 Conclusion: Experienced impact on gender+ equality

The interviews with participants reveal how they saw their own lives before and at the time of the project. The interviews also show how they experienced the interventions and their impact. This helps answer a key research question: How do men who participate in social interventions that target disadvantaged men experience impact of interventions (on social locations, identities, and norms)? (RQ1d).

When participants described the problems that were the reason for their joining a project, these were mostly due to unemployment, being low-skilled workers and/or being disadvantaged as (non-white) immigrants. Many participants experienced misfortunes that they related to their individual choices as well as to structural inequalities such as unfare labour relations and racism/discrimination. The participants perceived the interventions as meetings, "courses", or social activities in which they found solutions to some of their problems, and in some cases (also) found ways to help others. Though sometimes men did not know exactly what the project would be like at the start of the project, they stuck around because they enjoyed the company, saw benefits for their own lives, or saw ways in which they could contribute to the lives of others, including their children and neighbourhood youth (not women per se).

The impact participants experienced on their disadvantaged locations was due to the fact that men were helped to have more active lives (again) and given the prospect of paid jobs. In that sense, the projects improved their individual social locations. The interventions also impacted on (masculine) practices such as fatherhood. In the projects, men reflected on their own upbringing and the way they raised children. They wanted to be more involved and less strict (sometimes less violent) than their own fathers, and at the same time were looking for better ways to discipline children. The intervention was a tool for them to become more conscious of the changes they wanted to make, and to learn parenting skills and ways to solve specific problems from professionals and other fathers.

Some men also experienced an impact on their relationships with women. These men wanted to have more equal lives, sharing work and care more equally, which could also have a positive impact on the individual social locations of women. Most respondents, however, did not recognize gender (in)equality (or related topics) as being part of the project. Though it was generally considered a difficult topic to discuss with men, some saw a need and a possibility to discuss gender equality issues.

Where their identities and emotions were concerned, many respondents experienced a stronger sense of purpose and community because of the interventions. After spending a great deal of time at home facing complex problems and feeling powerless and disconnected, the

interventions helped them feel connected to "society" by belonging to a group of men with whom they could talk about their problems and find "useful" things to do. The men experienced the projects as comforting, fulfilling their needs for contact, and confirming/repairing their (masculine) identities. The interventions helped the men familiarize with other ethnic groups or made their own ethnic identities stronger and more positive in ways that strengthened their position in Dutch society. Although some of the men saw that structural inequalities were behind their own problems, there was no expectation that the projects would be part of a solution to such structural problems: not for their disadvantaged class locations, nor for ethnic discrimination. There was furthermore no strong identification with gender equality as a political cause. In that sense, the projects were a-political.

The impact they experienced can be seen as impact on norms as well. The men felt a strong urge to be more active. This urge was reinforced by the participation norms that professionals communicated. Because the men already felt a need to conform to the norm of being active citizens, these norms did not need to be communicated very explicitly. More forceful interventions, moreover, were seen as counterproductive. Some of the men saw the projects as positive alternatives to reintegration programs, which they had experienced as more strict, patronizing, and distant. The male-emancipation projects offered the men a stronger sense of control over their lives, while the regular reintegration programs made them feel less in control. Some men felt that these projects offered volunteer work as a basis for belonging to (Dutch) society, whereas other interventions would urge them to do paid or unfulfilling unpaid jobs. On the other hand, the men would probably soon be expected to take the next "step" on the participation ladder (see 2.3) and do paid work, especially when after having shown they were able to work. In that sense the projects aligned with neoliberal communitarian discourses that push citizens to "useful" roles.

Most participants perceived the norm to be involved fathers as one to which they wanted to conform. This did not mean, however, that the men wanted to share care work equally with women. Involved fatherhood foremost meant being present and showing concern about children's wellbeing by spending (fun) time with them and disciplining them when necessary (in pacified ways, using negotiating parenting styles). In that sense, culturalist discourses were present in the ways participants perceived the projects. They saw projects as interventions that helped them change the way they were fathers and become better fathers who helped prepare children to conform to (Dutch) society. Their desire for change was already present before the projects started, they said, so the norms presented in the projects did not conflict with the norms the men already had internalized. Yet participants also wanted their children, including their daughters, to be able to have active, successful lives, which therefore not only concerned conforming their children, but also enabling them to achieve their goals.

The interventions gave the participants opportunities to change something in their lives which they wanted to change. They enabled a more active life, and familiarized men with ethnic diversity and/or strengthened their ethnic identity, which gave them a stronger sense of belonging. However, the interventions mainly improved men's lives by conforming and normalizing them, encouraging a specific kind of "self-policing" (Foucault 1975/1991) and not questioning structural inequalities. When the participants' experiences of inequalities are compared to the professionals' framing it shows that there is a discrepancy. Though many men saw that there were structural inequalities (in labour relations, ethnic inequality, and/or the

position of people with health problems), the interventions only offered individual solutions and helped the men create a stronger sense of belonging by conforming. The interventions did not help to push towards more structural changes. Participants also did not seem to expect the interventions to have a more enabling or resisting role. Participants appreciated the debates on topics like discrimination and class inequality because they felt they could express themselves, but the impact they experienced shows the projects created a pacified masculinity – in labour relations as well as parenting – and not a politically activated masculinity (or humanity) (peaceful or not), whether to more actively improve their own disadvantaged locations or those of others.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

If men are considered "gatekeepers" of gender equality, it would be helpful to involve them in gender equality issues, letting them reflect on and change harmful practices and structures. Men, however, are not a homogenous group, and many face disadvantages themselves. Involving disadvantaged men in gender equality issues entails specific challenges that I have studied in this study.

I have studied how social interventions aiming to both empower disadvantaged men and involve them in gender equality impact on gender+ equality. I have looked at inequality from an intersectional perspective – with a focus on class, ethnicity and gender - and distinguished three specific aspects based on Yuval-Davis' facets of belonging (2011): social locations, identities/emotions, and norms/discourses. The three facets help differentiate on what exactly these interventions impact on: does the intervention affect (individual or structural) possibilities and constraints that are constructed through gendered, ethnicized, classed and/or other practices? Does it affect the men's feelings and identity, those of others, and/or the way others see these men? Or does it affect how disadvantaged men are normatively expected to behave, think, or feel, or how they expect others to behave, think, and feel?

I have combined this intersectional, three-facetted view with a more specific perspective using insights from masculinities studies, which helps us to understand the impact of social interventions on men and (their) masculinities, that is, on configurations of practices that are historically structured by unequal gender relations (Connell 2005a: 44). Additionally, by taking on a Foucauldian perspective I have reflected on whether the interventions' impact was normalizing, enabling, or otherwise. Taking these perspectives into consideration, I aimed to answer the following two main research questions:

> ***RQ1*** *How do social interventions that target disadvantaged men impact on gender+ (in)equality? (RQ1a: on social locations, identities, and norms?)*
>
> ***RQ 2*** *In which ways can (the impact of) social interventions targeting disadvantaged men be valued as normalizing, enabling, or otherwise?*

In this concluding chapter, I will answer these questions and reflect on the unforeseen research outcomes (6.1). After addressing the three theoretical challenges discussed in the introduction (6.2), I will reflect on the theoretical transferability and limitations of my study, and formulate recommendations for future research (6.3).

6.1 Impact on gender+ equality, counter- narratives to dominant discourses, and subjectification

Impact on gender+ equality: Social locations, identities, and norms

In my research, I studied a particular kind of social interventions. The social interventions I studied were Dutch "male-emancipation" projects for migrant and non-migrant men with a low education of whom most were unemployed. The professionals working in the field of social work and civil society who organized these projects framed their interventions as addressing two main problems: "social isolation" and "traditional values and behaviour". Social isolation was more specifically framed as unemployment, segregation, low social capital, lack of activities, and/or loneliness. "Traditional values and behaviour" referred to unequal gender norms and unequal gendered practices. The aims, as articulated by the professionals, were to encourage men to "participate" in society and to "emancipate" them. This emancipation implied both gender equality (in the Dutch context gender equality policies have always been labelled "emancipation" policies) and the advancement of the men themselves.

My study has shown that the interventions ultimately improved men's social locations only in limited and mostly individual ways, teaching participants skills, widening their social network, and motivating them to seek (unpaid) employment. As a way to encourage men to participate in society, the projects had a strong focus on feelings of belonging and self-confidence. Improving men's social locations was thus mainly done by framing social locations through a lens of identity and emotions, rather than attempting to actually improve their social locations and create more structural equality. This emphasis on identities and feelings of belonging over social locations was most clearly apparent in group discussions on ethnic discrimination, where professionals often emphasized discrimination as a feeling that can be misplaced or should be overcome. The project plans also framed ethnic inequality as "feelings of being discriminated against", which strongly resonates with the dominant Dutch discourse on ethnic discrimination which ignores and trivializes many forms of discrimination and racism (see also Chapter 2; Essed & Trienekens 2008; Ghorashi 2006; Wekker 2016).

The solution to the problem of discrimination that was formulated in these cases was, accordingly, mainly to take away or soften these feelings and perceptions rather than do something against discrimination itself and respond to discrimination/racism in resisting ways. Both my interviews with participants and my observations of project practices, however, showed that there was a strong interest among (migrant) participants in debating ethnic discrimination (also as intersecting with inequality along class lines, see 3.1 and 5.1). Yet in discussions about discrimination, professionals were mostly preoccupied with "leaving negative feelings behind" and focus positively on "participating", stimulating more pacified masculinities in the men who the professionals perceived as disappointed, frustrated, and angry before the interventions. In other words, not only were social locations almost exclusively seen through the lens of identities, the projects' main practices were aimed at conforming men to participation norms. In many cases this worked out successfully. Resonating with neoliberal communitarian discourses, the professionals encouraged participants to be aware of their "responsibility" to be active citizens (see Chapter 2; Van Houdt *et al.* 2011; Schinkel & van Houdt 2010). Most project activities were aimed at participation, and men were encouraged to feel like responsible men by attaining paid or volunteer work. They were called on their responsibility as good men, citizens, ethnic role

models, or fathers. The participation goal in that sense meant conforming the men and making them fit for "useful" (unpaid) occupations. Encouraging more involved fatherhood can also be seen as ways to conform migrant families as disciplined neoliberal citizens and to prevent youth criminality.

My interviews with participants showed that this responsibilization found fertile ground and impacted the men by either increasing their wish to become active or by actually becoming active in (unpaid) work. Participants already felt a strong responsibility to be active as men and as citizens, and some felt they needed to oppose negative stereotypical images of specific ethnic groups by presenting themselves as "good citizens". Many men experienced failure and rejection due to not having a paid job, even when their unemployment was caused by disability or discrimination/racism. Participants thus appreciated the projects for helping them "fit (back) in", on the precondition that the interventions offered them a sense of self-control. When men felt they were enabled to make their own choices, they felt stronger and more embedded in society. To some, working as a volunteer formed a welcomed (temporary) alternative to paid employment and a liberation from hegemonic norms of being a breadwinner. For them, the project was an improvement compared to stricter reintegration programs. This was most clearly found in interviews with men in more severe situations of social isolation who had lost contact with their employment environment, family, and friends, and who wanted to "regain contact with society". In that sense, the men were open to change and to conform to dominant norms, as long as they could make their own choices. There were also men who were not able to conform to the participation norm and continued to feel excluded. This happened when there were barriers to working as a volunteer, mismatches between what the men were looking for and the volunteer work that was offered, or continuing personal or mental issues (in Case Study 1 and 2, for instance, some participants were unable to find suitable volunteer work or dropped out of the project).

A similar pre-intervention openness to change was found in the way men wanted to be different fathers than their own had been: less strict and distant, more negotiating and involved, yet still disciplining. Rather than changing men from "traditional", to "emancipated" in their father role, the interventions thus impacted on the men's social norms in a way that was supportive of their already changing norms and practices. Many of the men noted that they had already been looking for new ways of (and norms on) how to be a good father previous to the project. The interviews and observations showed that for them the intervention was an instrument for self-induced change, rather than a project that disciplined them (Verloo 1992: 171). Some instead focussed on encouraging others to be "better" (more involved) fathers as a way to improve the community with which they identified. This was also visible in the way men interacted with each other and advised each other to be involved and not too strict fathers (in Case Study 2 and 4.2.1). In interviews, men talked about how they were looking for ways to be a better father than their own, often strict and distant fathers, which for some was their reason to participate in the projects. The fatherhood norms and practices promoted in the projects were not necessarily gender equal, as they mostly concerned disciplining children in peaceful ways and bonding with children, not necessarily dividing care and paid work equally with women, or raising sons and daughters in more gender equal ways (though this last topic was discussed in some of the projects).

These combinations of the projects' aims and practices and the partcipants' perceptions and experiences thereof affected the men's individual social locations by increasing their possibilities because of the help men received and the skills they learned. The men's identities and emotions were affected by the stronger sense of belonging and self-esteem they reported. The interviews showed that many participants felt stronger and more aware of what they wanted to do or be in the future. The projects reinforced dominant social norms that the men had already internalized – the responsibility to work and the norm of "involved fatherhood" – but they also lowered the (sometimes crippling) pressure men felt to be breadwinners by presenting volunteer work and parenting as alternative ways to be a "good man" and a "good citizen". Though this still subjected the men to norms of being active and useful, it stretched the classic masculine breadwinner norm and offered men some more space to do volunteer work instead of having a paid job.

The "(male) emancipation" aim that professionals formulated at the start of the projects meant that they aimed to improve gender equality and to enhance women's lives via men. I characterise this framing of emancipation as "(two-sided) gender equality" (two-sided here meaning that gender equality can be beneficial to both men and women). Migrant men were targeted according to this frame more than non-migrant men. Their cultures were seen as problematic and requiring adaptation to Dutch culture, which closely resonated with culturalist citizenship discourses on (especially Muslim) migrant men. The (two-sided) gender equality frame also resonated with the gender equality norms that have been articulated for men in the Netherlands since the second wave of feminism (see Chapter 2). Some projects saw white Dutch men as in need of gender equality emancipation as well.

The projects' emancipation aim, however, was also articulated another way. In many projects it also implied strengthening the position of disadvantaged men themselves, and some understood male emancipation to mainly consist of achieving this last goal – I call this the "advancement of men" frame. Achieving emancipation, in these cases, overlapped with the "participation" goal, as professionals saw participation as advancing the men in society.

Furthermore, self-determination was an important aspect of the way professionals defined emancipation (both within the gender equality and the advancement of men frame). With that in mind, professionals articulated bottom-up approaches to include participants in decisions about activities and goals, meaning that they asked the men what they themselves wanted to address and change, which in practice mostly turned out not to be gender equality (except in limited and implicit ways, because fathers wanted to reflect on parenting). From the start, professionals found it difficult to address the goal of gender equality, and most of them had few concrete plans or methods to do so, especially compared to the tools and models they had to tackle their participation goals. I thus found few practices aimed at gender equality in my observations and my interviews with participants. Most practices that did address gender equality were found in discussions about parenting, which presented as ideals raising sons and daughters equally, being an involved father, and talking peacefully with children and spouses (instead of taking up a strict, distant and aggressive father role). These interactions stimulated pacified/peaceful masculinities in that sense that men who professionals perceived as formerly or potentially aggressive were presented more restrained, negotiating masculinities.

The interviews showed that few respondents experienced any impact on their relationships with women or on their masculinity. Some planned to "help" their (future) wife or

girlfriend more with household tasks, or wanted to divide work and raise their sons and daughters more equally. How this reflected on the men's actual behaviour is hard to assess, however, especially because in some cases these men were not currently in relationships. There were also men who had difficulty with the idea of raising sons and daughters equally, because they wanted to "protect" their daughters more, while for sons this was seen as less necessary. In only one case did a participant point to the intervention as having convinced him to "allow" his wife to continue her career as a nurse, while previously he had wanted her to stay at home and stop her studies (in other cases this was not an issue and/or the issue was not raised). "Helping" with household tasks and "allowing" a career does not necessarily mean equality, of course, as it is only a small move away from strictly divided roles. "Helping" presumes that it is mainly the other's task, and "allowing" someone a career presumes that a man has the power to do so as it is not a woman's choice. On a more positive note, these changes can be seen as moving in a more equal direction.

Altogether, impact on social locations mostly concerned advancement of the disadvantaged men themselves and hardly by addressing their privilege as men (nor any privilege they might have as white, heterosexual, or cis men). The projects' practices were mainly aimed at the men's individual feelings of belonging and on their participation, which resulted in (limited) individual improvements of social locations, a stronger sense of belonging, a more self-confident identity, and conforming to dominant norms of participation. Sometimes projects also liberated from strict breadwinner masculinities, by encouraging unpaid work as valid and conveying a (non-authoritarian) father role as being important and fulfilling for men. Dominant social norms concerning active citizenship were clearly communicated, while gender equality norms were mostly communicated implicitly through discussions about parenting. In other words, when comparing (intended) articulated aims and (unintended) practice this shows that gender equality faded in practice, even though most projects formulated clear intentions to address "traditional values and behaviour" related to gender.

In the next section, I will further discuss unexpected outcomes, including the fading of gender equality in many projects and some counter-narratives to (Dutch) dominant discourses that appeared in the projects.

Unexpected research outcomes: Fading gender equality goals and emerging counter-narratives

Fading of gender equality goals: obstacles, strategies, and impact

As mentioned above, the most crucial and unexpected finding in this study is the fading of the gender equality goal, which became apparent when plans, practices, and experiences were compared. A closer look at this process offers interesting insights in how such fading occurs; what strategies were used to oppose this fading of gender equality goals; and what impact those different strategies have on gender+ equality.

There were several mechanisms at work that led to the fading of gender equality: being distracted due to the men's disadvantaged position, wanting to maintain a "positive" atmosphere in order to empower men, protecting participants from further stigmatization, communicating

differently about the project's goals backstage and frontstage, and choosing an easier way out when a project's goal (emancipation) could be interpreted different ways. Furthermore, there was a lack of experience and a lack of tools to overcome or prevent these mechanisms (I will discuss these in greater detail in 6.2).

In a closer study of the project practices in which gender equality was addressed, I noticed that it was in most cases addressed in the following "tiptoeing" ways: professionals chose topics that had to do with both disadvantage and gender privilege, in which the balance mostly tipped over towards disadvantage, and gender was only briefly or implicitly addressed; most professionals addressed gender equality via other topics, while only some professionals and projects presented gender equality as one of the frontstage goals from the start. In order to connect to men, some professionals (only) highlighted the way gender equality was beneficial for men. Professionals used tools and spaces that guided towards gender equality topics or put the men in a situation in which they would perform non-classically masculine practices (mostly cooking). Many projects involved both men and women, hereby making both genders' voices heard and not creating hostile environments for women. Lastly, some professionals tried to de-essentialize gender binaries by telling de-essentializing histories or personal stories about themselves. Some hired gender experts to outsource de-essentializing inequality, and show that male and female norms and practices are not fixed and that more equality is possible (see Chapter 4). Yet, also in many cases where gender equality was addressed, conversations and reflections were limited, because the experiences and opinions of the men themselves were often only briefly discussed, or because gender was discussed in essentialist, stereotypical ways.

Moreover, I found that when professionals and participants with more privilege (white and/or middle class) put themselves forward as "role models" or "good examples" by telling personal stories or talking about the way their intimate relationships worked, this ran the risk of creating a patronizing, normalizing effect rather than an empowering process within a minority community. Having a shared ethnic and/or migration experience helped professionals connect with participants and enable a transformation from within the community. The cross-cultural/ethnic connections between participants and professionals (specifically concerning professionals with Afro-Caribbean backgrounds working with white Dutch groups or groups with other migration backgrounds) show that a shared "disadvantaged" or minoritized experience can form a strong basis for a participant-professional connection. The professionals could also connect to participants through a relationship of trust that was built over time, which I noticed among professionals with and without similar migration backgrounds as their project's participants and by both men and women (aligning with research by Robb *et al.* 2015).

Addressing gender equality in (exclusively) backstage and "tiptoeing" ways hardly (re)produced compassionate masculinities and arguably even reproduced non-(openly)compassionate masculinities. Professionals, assuming that men would not be interested in improving women's lives, hid the topic and did not present it as a goal men should want to strive for. The few projects that were run by women's organizations and one run by an organization specialized in engaging men in gender equality were more successful in addressing gender equality. They discussed the topics more openly and in a de-essentializing way, which shows that experience and expertise makes it easier to address gender equality. These more overt/frontstage approaches formed an alternative discourse to the more dominant "tiptoeing" way of discussing gender equality.

In interviews, participants themselves indicated that they or "men like them" would not want to be pushed to behave in certain ways in relationships, implying a similar fear of losing control over their lives, which many also had also encountered at work, while being unemployed or in integration programs. There was a strong emphasis on choice in the men's narratives as they highlighted that they chose to participate in the programs and that they chose to make changes in their lives, including changes they made as fathers and in intimate relationships. It showed how the men were trying to preserve or regain an unambiguous masculinity in lives where their authority and therefore their (hegemonic) masculine identity is often taken from them. In these projects, however, many men regained a less ambiguous male identity without necessarily subordinating others, which contrasts with other ways in which disadvantaged men are understood to preserve their masculine identity (Cooper 2006: 867). Some respondents argued that it would be possible to address gender equality if this was done in careful and "respectful" ways, in which it would be up to the men themselves what they shared about their private lives and what they wanted to change. The notion of need for "respect" and "control" strongly resonates with an idea of (male) dignity that is in danger of being threatened (Knights & Tullberg 2011: 389; Dolan 2011). When this fragile identity is confronted with a "paternalist" intervention that questions or aim to diminish privilege, this creates a strong tension. In that sense, there was an overlap in the way (some) respondents saw possibilities for change and the way professionals saw a need for a careful approach in which dignity and male authority is preserved. Altogether, gender equality was not a bottom-up topic and ran a high risk of fading. Participants as well as professionals portrayed possibilities for engaging men in gender equality in "careful" or "respectful" ways, which helped men preserve or gain a sense of control and choice, but kept privilege mostly out of focus.

Counter-narratives: Guiding self-directed changes in participation and fatherhood

More overt/frontstage strategies to address gender equality can be seen as an alternative to the project professionals' more dominant strategies, which favoured a "hidden" approach and only formulated the gender equality goal among colleagues "backstage". Given that many projects had mostly migrant participants, however, any overt or frontstage approach at the same time ran the risk of aligning with dominant culturalist discourses which assume immigrant men need to assimilate to a (white) Dutch norm that is (imagined to be) gender equal. Such an approach especially risks blatant paternalism when assumptions are made about difference and inequality while only targeting migrant men and not inquiring into those men's actual practices and opinions. Including combinations of migrant and non-migrant men or focussing on class or on "socially isolated men" instead of ethnicity were less culturalist strategies, but they can also be seen as ways to mask targeting ethnicity.[52]

Interventions that offered participants the space to gain more control over their lives can be seen as providing a counter-narrative to dominant neoliberal discourses. Such interventions formed an alternative to more strict and constraining reintegration programs which offer little professional guidance and little consideration for the men's backgrounds and wishes, or to citizenship courses which bluntly present "Dutch" norms to which migrants have to adapt. In

[52] I derive this idea of masking ethnicity by highlighting class from Marleen van der Haar (in a conversation on 10-3-2017).

that sense, the approach of all these male-emancipation projects was an alternative to the stricter, less egalitarian, and more paternalist dominant discourses, which the men felt were constraining and took away their "sense of control".

When professionals expressed more critical and structural views on ethnic discrimination, this presented an alternative narrative to the dominant Dutch discourse that trivializes racism/ethnic discrimination. In the second case study, professionals (with Moroccan backgrounds) supported men who felt responsible for improving their neighbourhood and wanted to do something about the bad reputation they felt they had as Moroccan (post)immigrants. These professionals at the same time strongly emphasized that these men should not feel responsible for the way Moroccan immigrants are represented in Dutch media and politics. The professionals highlighted possible changes the men could make, while also acknowledging the structural ethnic inequalities these men (and arguably the professionals themselves) faced in their everyday lives. This way they combined responsibilization with de-responsibilization, which was a counter-narrative to the one-sided neoliberal responsibilization discourse that holds the individual responsible, as well as an alternative to the trivialization of ethnic discrimination.

The fact that participants actively aimed to improve their lives and those of their children offers a counter-narrative to dominant discourses that depict migrant men in particular as "traditional" and in need of external change. The men who talked about already having wanted to change the way they brought up their children before the projects started only confirm this. These participants saw the projects as facilitating changes they wanted to make. They explained that they had had (some) negative experiences with the way they were raised and wanted to be less strict and more involved fathers themselves. Discussing parenting with other fathers and with a trainer was therefore a facilitating intervention in which men took active stands, not one that changed fathers from strictly "traditional" to "emancipated". Sharing similar experiences with other fathers positively affected their feelings of belonging – as it made them feel that their problems were heard and acknowledged – and was a way to find solutions for common parenting problems.

Looking over the projects' aims and practices, and the way their participants experienced them, it becomes clear that the interventions, which were mainly aimed at "participation" and parenting, especially impacted on the men's sense of belonging and, to some extent, positively affected their individual social locations. Because gender equality got watered down as a topic, the projects' impact on gender equality was only limited, despite its being one of the main aims of the projects and one of the main reasons to organize projects for men in the first place. The professionals' limited experience with tackling gender equality and lack of specific tools already pointed in that direction from the start of the project, while the indicated mechanisms added to the fading of gender equality as a core issue. The exceptions to these findings show that addressing gender equality with men is possible with the help of some tools that guide conversations in "respectful" ways. Many professionals used "hidden" and tiptoeing strategies to address gender equality carefully, but more overt or frontstage strategies also proved to be possible. This overt approach led to discussions but also created space for more compassionate masculinities, potentially leading to more equal gendered+ practices (social locations), identities, and norms. In order for the ideas presented in the projects to resonate with those of participants, respondents say they had to be brought in respectful ways by a professional who could connect with them. This connection happened through being involved in their lives and community or by

sharing their experiences of being disadvantaged. Some projects, furthermore, offered counter-narratives in the form of other ways of being "good" men than just as breadwinners and strict fathers, and encouraged men to be involved negotiating fathers and engaged citizens doing volunteer work they would like to do. In the next section I will further reflect on these impacts and answer my second research question.

The impact on subjectification: Enabling, constraining, normalizing, and liberating

Now I have discussed the projects' impact on gender+ (in)equality, unexpected outcomes, and counter-narratives to dominant discourses, I will interpret their impact in relation to subjectification. Was their impact on gender+ (in)equality normalizing and did the interventions subordinate participants? Or was the impact enabling and did the interventions create enabled men that could actively stand against the oppression of themselves and/or others? Or should there be more differentiation, and are other qualifications needed to understand the interventions' impact on subjectification? In other words: in which ways can the (impact of) social interventions targeting disadvantaged men be valued as normalizing, enabling or otherwise? (RQ2)

Many interventions found in this study had enabling as well as normalizing aspects (i.e. they were normalizing-enabling). Interviewed men experienced the projects as enabling interventions that took away their sense of having no control over their lives. Many of the men felt a lack of control because of their disadvantaged social locations, sense of disempowerment, and more concrete misfortunes in their lives. The interventions can be called enabling when they offered guidance to improve the men's lives while letting them make their own decisions. At the same time, such interventions can still be normalizing when they conform the men to dominant participation norms. The projects' impact was often normalizing, not in a top-down forced way, but in an egalitarian (though still paternalist) way (van den Berg 2013). Interviews showed that many men wanted normalized lives themselves, and observations showed how professionals guided these wishes in combined top-down/bottom-up ways. This bottom-up normalisation should be understood as the men making their own choices to improve their possibilities within the context of dominant discourses. Since these discourses (had) also impacted on the participants outside the interventions, this meant that adjusting to them with the help of the projects enabled them to achieve their own goals.

Furthermore, the projects were often emotionally empowering (enabling) in pacifying (and therefore normalizing) ways. The professionals created spaces where men listened to each other's experiences with class and ethnic inequality (class and ethnic discrimination, most clearly seen in Case Study 1), but only in order to then be able to move on with a more positive attitude and start "participating". This way, the interventions constrained some men's wishes to oppose oppressive social structures and mainly had a normalizing effect.

Interventions that did not give participants a sense of control and pushed them to conform can be described as normalizing and constraining at the same time (or normalizing-constraining). Such an impact was clearly seen in the way discrimination was debated in the first case study, which only encouraged the men to doubt whether discrimination had really occurred and to avoid confrontation.

Liberating and enabling interventions were those that offered space to express critical views and to encourage awareness of social locations and dominant discourses. The professionals in the second case study helped men improve their neighbourhoods, but also acknowledged their structurally unequal positions and encouraged them to be aware and critical of these, thereby helping the men question dominant discourses and social locations and at the same time empowering them to (re-)establish a self-assured identity. This strategy can be described as liberating and enabling (liberating-enabling). Interventions that tried to de-essentialize gender, gendered practices, and norms also offered such a liberating-enabling direction for change (by sharing de-essentializing personal stories or historical narratives as shown in Chapter 5). While possibly also constraining men if it meant giving up privilege, the impact of these interventions moreover might have been enabling and liberating for others (women). Some practices helped liberate men from (hegemonic) dominant citizenship norms and breadwinner masculinities: instead of only being pushed towards paid work or unpaid work they did not want to do, the men were allowed to find an "accepted" role and develop a more positive sense of self-worth by doing volunteer work or by being involved fathers.

Most practices, however, had no liberating effects on the men's struggles with oppressive class structures or from discrimination, and did not enable participants to stand up to a state that is breaking down a welfare system on which many depended. The projects' enabling (and liberating) impact did not go beyond improvements to individual lives and did not encourage taking action against inequalities, even though the men did experience structural inequalities.

Furthermore, in some projects professionals ethnicized problems by articulating assumptions that certain problems were part of a specific ethnic community. This is especially stigmatizing and disempowering (and therefore alienating) when articulated by someone outside of an ethnic community who does not know the individual issues of the men in the group. Other projects can be labelled as familiarizing, as they helped introduce men to an ethnically diverse society. Both migrant men and white Dutch men felt less uncomfortable or less threatened in diverse city streets because of the diverse contacts they had in the projects. This notion offers a new way of validating such an intervention and a counter-narrative to (culturalist) integration discourses that highlight the way migrants adapt to majority white society.

Altogether, the projects were enabling to a limited extent: enabling men to conform, to normalize, to feel more positive about their position in society, but not enabling in a way that helped them liberate themselves from dominant discourses or protest structural inequality. Only a few professionals, in limited ways, resisted dominant gender norms and discussed the way gender is constructed, or discussed ways in which women experienced oppression. Only few discussed possibilities for men to have more equal lives by sharing tasks with their partner equally, raising boys and girls equally, both tackling privilege of men as well as the costs of that privilege. Such interventions were enabling and liberating for men as well as for women.

6.2 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS: FACETS OF GENDER+ INEQUALITY, MASCULINITY, AND SUBJECTIFICATION

In the introduction of this dissertation I noted three theoretical challenges: 1) How to understand intersectional inequalities? 2) How to understand the gendered inequalities of disadvantaged men 3) How to understand and value the impact of social interventions? What are the implications of my research findings for these theoretical challenges?

Challenge 1: How to understand intersectional inequalities? A multi-facetted perspective

The challenge of understanding intersectional inequalities is linked to the complexity it entails. There is broad agreement that multiple dimensions of inequality are linked to each other, but there is little theoretical guidance for ways to identify these dimensions and where they intersect.

The intersectional gender+ perspective in this study has allowed an understanding of inequality that is attentive to different dimensions of inequality (specifically class, ethnicity, and gender), to intersections between those dimensions, and to different facets of inequality. It has shown whether and how interventions impacted on dimensions of inequality, social locations, identities and emotions, as well as norms. This intersectional and multi-facetted perspective has helped to offer a broad dynamic perspective on inequality, as well as specifically assess what the social interventions impacted.

Where possible, I have studied intersections between different dimensions of inequality, and especially how professionals and participants framed problems in terms of single or multiple dimensions of inequality. This perspective revealed that the interviewed professionals most often saw problems in terms of single inequalities, highlighting problems with unemployment or ethnic discrimination. Participants (with migrant backgrounds) more strongly highlighted the way their unemployment, ethnic discrimination, and class positioning intersected, and how they could not fulfil the breadwinner role that was expected of them as men. Generally, though, participants showed little reflection on their own privilege as men. The exceptions were professionals who saw particular men's problems as resulting from their intersection of ethnicity/migrant backgrounds and gender, with (stereotypically) specific differences between Muslim men, Afro-Caribbean men, and men with traveller backgrounds (Case Study 3). The professionals' understanding of these intersections, however, did not lead them to design interventions that went beyond individual empowerment and participation through volunteer work. Professionals thus often focussed on individual identity instead of structural inequalities. The consequence of this was that the projects only seek individual solutions in which participants are encouraged to look inward for strength instead of resisting the way they are subjugated.

The gender perspective in the projects was more limited than expected. I nevertheless highlighted the gendered dimension of the projects by using the gender+ (in)equality concept. By doing so I could unpack the inequality dimension that often remains hidden when talking about men, while also considering other inequality dimensions. With the focus on gender+ I could also understand how gender faded as a topic and which strategies to put gender on the table were still to be found. In the interviews with participants, my focus was more strongly on the disadvantages of the men themselves and on the way they perceived the interventions, than on

gender. Because of the "open", semi-structured way of interviewing, privileges of men were highlighted less.

Yuval-Davis' analytic distinction between different facets of inequality – social locations, identities/feelings, and norms/discourses – has helped understand how it was not just social locations on intersecting dimensions of inequality that were part of the ways men were disadvantaged and the ways professionals framed problems: the men's identities and feelings of belonging proved even more pronounced in the projects, while (participation and responsibility) norms that strongly resonated with current dominant (Dutch) neoliberal and culturalist discourses could also easily be recognized in the projects. Putting the professionals' framing and participants' narratives in the context of dominant discourses revealed how the projects and the lives of men do not just take place as micro-interactions or in a meso-institutional environment of civil society and social work, but are part of larger macro-processes. These processes interfere with micro- and meso-frames and perceptions, and are reproduced by them, while they are sometimes also contradicted within the micro- and meso-setting. As such counter-narratives showed possibilities for changing oppressive dominant discourses, they are important to highlight in social research on gender+ inequality.

The research also showed how facets of inequality are interconnected. Social locations were approached through identities and emotions; and identities and emotions were influenced by (minor) changes in social locations, as men felt empowered by having new (individual) possibilities. Moreover, the way men were expected to have positive attitudes toward Dutch society revealed "feeling rules" that are found in other Dutch social interventions as well (Hochschild 2003; Tonkens 2012), which per definition shows an interconnection between feelings and norms.

Attentiveness to gender+ inequality, intersections, and facets of inequality has proven itself to help understand how participants were disadvantaged and privileged at the same time, though the projects mostly addressed their disadvantage(s) in practice. It showed how professionals focussed on disadvantage as a way to connect with future participants, starting in the way they framed the men's problems and their solutions, but even more so in their interactions with participants. At the background of this individual approach is that, most often, social locations were seen through a lens of identity and feelings of belonging. Additionally, existing social norms in dominant discourses (neoliberal individual responsibilization, culturalization, and trivializing/ignoring racism) guided professionals towards such an individual perspective, mostly ignoring structural inequalities (as argued in Chapter 2).

The division between social locations and identities is a valuable way of understanding that inequalities are not always recognized or identified with: in this study, this was clearest in the way privilege got little attention. It has also put the researcher (and her research subjects) in a difficult situation: categorizing them into social locations without themselves identifying as such can be disempowering. This was the case when using categories such as disadvantaged men, migrant men, privileged men, which are ascribed qualifications that I attributed to them and they did not use in their own life stories. When making analytical distinctions – which is still helpful to unpack certain power relations – it should be understood that participants/subjects might not have always identified as such.

In conclusion, applying the multi-facetted lens of Yuval-Davis has proven to enable a comprehensive analysis of intersectional inequalities covering not only material dimensions of

inequality (social locations), but also identities on an individual and collective level and discursive dimensions (social norms).

Challenge 2: How to understand inequalities of disadvantaged men? Masculinities and inequalities

The second challenge is how to integrate attention for male privilege with attention for disadvantage based on class, ethnicity or other in order to fully understand inequality of disadvantaged men.

This study shows that male privilege has hardly been addressed in the studied interventions. Instead there was a strong focus on (disadvantaged) identities and feelings of non-belonging, contributing to an individualization of social issues, and limiting the projects' impact on the men themselves and on improving women's lives. A lack of criticism of dominant discourses and a lack of recognition of how privilege is hard to recognize for those who have it both make it difficult to break through this individualization of social issues. This conclusion confirms insights from masculinities studies, where scholars have indicated that privilege can be "blinding" (Kimmel 1993; Messner 2000: 4); that many men do not see a need or a possibility for change (Connell 2005b: 1818); and/or that many men would think that change would be a threat to their privileged position and their identity (Connell 2005b: 1810–1811; 2005a: 236).

Importantly, I can add to the theory several mechanisms that led to the fading of gender equality as a goal in social interventions that aimed to engage disadvantaged men in gender equality issues. Firstly, there is a *distraction* mechanism, which occurs when other problems are perceived as more urgent for disadvantaged men, nor did the men raise it as a bottom-up topic. Secondly, I found a *positive atmosphere* mechanism, which occurs because the aim of empowering men makes it difficult to talk about negative topics, such as their privilege. Thirdly, I noticed a *protection from stigma* mechanism in the projects that is due to the fact that assuming disadvantaged men hamper women can be part of a stigma and therefore is avoided as a topic. Fourth, there is a *backstage/frontstage discrepancy* mechanism, which makes it hard to bring up topics that are not openly the goal of the project. The fifth is an *easy way out* mechanism that occurs when a goal has multiple meanings: as emancipation could also mean the advancement of men themselves in these projects, therefore fulfilling the advancement goal gives the impression that the emancipation goal has been achieved. Lastly, the professionals had little experience to overcome obstacles and to keep aiming for the gender equality goal despite the fading mechanisms at work.

The fading mechanisms I found in this study are closely related to the reasons why it is difficult to engage men in gender equality that masculinities studies have already highlighted. In fact, these mechanisms can be seen as specifications of those more abstract reasons: The distraction mechanism can be seen as a form of blinding of privilege, combined with a high "visibility" of, or "sensitivity" to, disadvantage, which is amplified when feelings and identities of participants are centre stage. The positive atmosphere and protection from stigma mechanisms show how professionals "protect" the men from the "threat" of being called out on their privilege, which Connell indicates as a reason why many men are not interested in the goal of gender equality (2005b: 1810–1811). The backstage/frontage discrepancy mechanism is also a way professionals protect men from a threat to their identity and privileged location. The "easy way out" mechanism can be seen as a semantic way out of a potential threatening situation, as it

makes it easier to let gender equality fade as a topic. These mechanisms are not necessarily deliberate ways to let the gender equality goal fade, but ways in which professionals let this goal slip while trying to connect with the men in their projects.

To further understand the inequalities disadvantaged men face and specifically to learn how disadvantaged men can be involved in gender equality issues, I have found 10 strategies professionals used to address gender equality that are useful to both theory on masculinities and interventions for disadvantaged men: 1) combining and balancing gender equality with other goals; 2) "slipping in" gender equality via other topics (including "tiptoeing" around the topic); 3) lifting the curtain between frontstage and backstage goals; 4) masculinizing gender equality; 5) materialising the topic in tools; 6) organizing gendered practices in gendered spaces; 7) involving both men and women in the projects; 8) de-essentializing gender by offering historical perspectives; 9) telling personal stories; and 10) involving gender experts (see Chapter 4). All these strategies helped professionals to address gender equality (though often still with limited impact).

Where the impact on masculinities is concerned, I have seen that in the process of addressing gender equality with men in a hidden way, and by masculinizing gender equality, a non-compassionate masculinity was (re)produced. This non-compassionate masculinity assumed that men would not be interested in gender equality goals or in improving the lives of women. Gender equality goals were addressed very carefully, "tiptoeing" around the topic, and were translated to ways in which gender equality would be beneficial for men themselves, reproducing the idea that men would not be interested in improving lives of women. More frontstage approaches created space to produce more compassionate masculinities instead. In these cases, professionals were open about the project's gender equality goals, including the ways in which gender equality would be beneficial to women, which was presented to men as a change that would positively affect them as well. Of course, this runs the risk of a backlash, which we saw in the way participants in a group of conservative Muslim men boasted about their conservatism, performing a "pious machismo" (while being less conservative in other settings) (as shown in Case Study 2). Such a backlash was also seen in the way one participant (white Dutch traveller background) showed aggressive behaviour towards his girlfriend – a "machismo" not related to religion – after she, in response to the project, demanded a more equal division of household tasks (as shown in Case Study 3).

I further suggest the concept of an "ideal masculinity" to denote a masculinity that is constructed through practices in a specific institutional setting and that normatively determine what a man should be like (already introduced in: van Huis & van der Haar 2013: 58). Such ideal masculinities are not necessarily hegemonic. Hegemonic masculinity, which is defined as the current configuration of practices that legitimize men's dominant position in society (Connell 2005a), remains influential as well. In other (institutional) settings, men are still confronted with hegemonic or other masculinities, depending on their intersectional positioning, which means that whether and how the men make changes in their everyday lives further depends on how various other relevant types of masculinities are reproduced and how men do this themselves. This was clearly seen in the way participants in Case Study 2 reproduced and enacted a form of pious machismo as well as gender equality norms. The concept of an ideal masculinity can be helpful in the search for ways in which men can perform equality-friendly masculinities, while hegemonic masculinity remains influential as well (Bloksgaard *et al.* 2015; Hearn *et al.* 2012; Pajumets & Hearn 2012). The pacified masculinity that was constructed in the projects can be

seen as such an "ideal masculinity". Pacified masculinity can be a (more) gender equal, peaceful masculinity that might improve the lives of the men's partners and children as well as the men's own sense of self-worth, but it can also prevent subjects from standing up for their own interests. The non-compassionate masculinity when it comes to women's positions that was found in the projects can be seen as part of hegemonic masculinity, whereas a compassionate masculinity counters such a hegemonic masculinity and forms a counter-narrative.

The possibility of compassionate or peaceful/pacified masculinities implies that masculinity, besides appearing in multiple and fluid forms, need not be understood as necessarily being in contrast or opposition to femininities (or other non-binary types of gendered practices), but can overlap with femininities. Often masculinity and femininity are formulated as contrasting opposites, whereas the ways people are socialized as boys/men and girls/women have a lot of similarities, even when they are raised in accordance to a binary gender division. The socialized aspects of masculinity and femininity that do not contrast with those of the other gender are often ignored as not being parts of gender identity or gendered practices, reinforcing the gender binary. I suggest we acknowledge this overlap more to do justice to this fluidity in the way people are socialized. This could result in masculinity and femininity in some cases becoming redundant as denominators or only required for historical reasons. One such historical reason for distinguishing between the two is that it is relevant to use the term pacified *masculinity* because aggression is predominantly and historically seen as a male characteristic. The same goes for compassionate masculinity: there is an assumption that masculinities used to be non-compassionate when it came to the position of women. We need to see it as a form of (fluid) masculinity in order to unpack the gendered (historical) dimension of the way men impact on inequalities in women's lives.

Lastly, in this study I have found two types of male emancipation: (*two-sided*[53]) *gender equality* and *advancement of men*. Sometimes these types were combined. In my research, I did not see any projects aimed only at improving the situation of women (which could be called an "altruist" form of male emancipation), nor did I see projects which aimed to advance men in a way that would intentionally disadvantage women (which could be called "egoist" male emancipation). Such interventions do exist elsewhere, however (Messner 2000).

Almost all projects lacked a clear intersectional understanding of male emancipation integrating male privilege with other disadvantages (for my suggestions on this see 6.3). This study used this absence to contribute to the theory by showing the mechanisms through which male privilege disappeared from the projects' attention.

Challenge 3: How can we value the impact of social interventions? Subjectification, normalizing, and enabling

The third challenge was to value the impact of social interventions in a way that acknowledges the power relations within the attempts to change the lives of disadvantaged men. Starting from Foucault's theory on subjectification, interventions that transform inequalities have been assessed by finding which subjectification processes these transformations instigate and to what

[53] I am aware of reproducing a gender binary by writing "two-sided", which is problematic. An alternative would be to just say gender equality male emancipation. However, this could be understood as gender equality that is only beneficial to women, while in the research field there was attention for the way gender equality would be beneficial for both women and men (in a binary way).

extent interventions are normalizing, or enabling, or should be described otherwise. Yuval-Davis' intersectional perspective highlighting facets of inequality – social locations, identities/emotions and norms – has proven useful to shed new light on subjectification, and better understand social interventions.

Besides studying how interventions are enabling and liberating, I found it analytically valuable to contrast the projects' normalizing impact with their liberating impact, and their enabling with their constraining impact, as normalization and enablement are not strict opposites of each other. Subsequently, I distinguished between a normalizing-enabling and a normalizing-constraining impact, and was able to note a liberating-enabling impact (liberating-constraining impacts made less sense in the context of this study, but it could be useful in others). I showed how interventions aimed at participation often had a normalizing-enabling impact when men wished to participate and conform, as long as they had control over their own decisions. Some interventions that pacified men's anger about discrimination and class inequality had a normalizing-constraining impact, as the men were led to ignore discrimination (and class) and concentrate on conforming and participating instead of on opposing structural inequalities, while they themselves were inclined to oppose such structures. Liberating-enabling were interventions in which the men discussed stereotypes and inequalities in a way that offered them the opportunity to reflect, form their own opinions, and act in new ways that offered new opportunities for themselves and others. This was most clearly seen in Case Study 2, as men reflected on what they wanted to change in their lives, starting with improving their own lives and those of their family.

The terms alienation and familiarization offered a way to describe how subjects' identities and feelings (of belonging) were impacted. Interventions that assumed ethnic and cultural differences, without knowing the participants beforehand, while presenting professionals' own norms as the ideal were alienating and stigmatizing (with potential pacifying and normalizing results), while interventions that bridged ethnic groups were familiarizing and potentially offered increased feelings of belonging (with enabling potential).

To connect these concepts to Yuval-Davis' multi-facetted approach, firstly, enabling and constraining transformations were predominantly found in the ways social locations were impacted on through changes to the men's opportunities and constraints. Secondly, regarding identities and emotions, interventions can be seen as either emotionally empowering (or emotionally enabling, or enabling through awareness) or disempowering, in the sense that they increased or decreased feelings of self-worth and the desire to take action against oppression. Interventions can furthermore impact on feelings of (non-)belonging by being familiarizing or alienating. Thirdly, interventions impacted on social norms in either normalizing or liberating ways. At the same time, normalization as a wider concept also concerns the ways in which human practices and the human psyche are pushed towards norms, which makes normalization and liberation also part of the way the impact on social locations and identities can be determined. An analytic division of these dimensions of subjectification helps to be attentive to these possible impacts when studying social interventions.

Concluding, in these projects, the participants' agency and desires for change sometimes aligned with normalizing interventions, and at other moments resisted it. Distinguishing between combinations of normalizing and enabling versus normalizing and constraining shows how complex the valuing of social interventions is, because not all social interventions are equally normalizing, or normalizing in the same way. In order to more comprehensively assess the value

of social interventions, a distinction needs be made between (unwanted, constraining) subjugation, the formation of compliant (constrained) subject-agents within a normalizing context, and the formation of liberated (enabled) subject-agents.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY, TRANSFERABILITY, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study has some limitations, most of all it offers interesting questions for future research. A first limitation is that the interventions turned out to be less explicitly about gender equality than expected. It would therefore be interesting to study interventions that do explicitly address gender equality and aim to improve the lives of men as well as those of the women in their lives. These would preferably be projects that do not hide their goal and use de-essentializing strategies along with tools that make gender equality about (also) improving the lives of women and not only those of men (as indicated in Chapter 4). With the help of the theoretical insights developed in this study, future research on these types of projects could point out the impact of such strategies on (facets of) gender+ equality for both men and women. A problematic aspect of such interventions could be the risk of paternalism, which should therefore be a central concept in the research. Although my theoretical insights are transferable to such future research, the local context would have to be taken into account as well, which still requires an (informed) grounded theory approach in which the researcher is open to unexpected outcomes.

A second limitation of this research was that the women in the participants' everyday lives were not included. My interviews with two female partners had interesting potential, though, and I believe future research should involve women more and assess how both men and the women in their lives experience the interventions. Another way to involve women's perspectives is to study projects that try to involve both men and women in gender equality through combined projects. In this study there were projects aiming to develop in that direction, and I already did some observations in projects where female participants were involved. Further research could be done on the way such combined projects impact on gender+ equality.

Thirdly, the projects aiming to empower disadvantaged men and involve them in gender equality that I studied here were all very specifically aimed at disadvantaged, mostly unemployed, working-class migrant and non-migrant men in the Netherlands. Studying interventions for other categories of men would bring new insights into the ways in which social interventions that target men impact on gender+ equality. Future research could transfer the theoretical framework to other groups of men and/or to other countries and compare the impacts in order to find out how different cultural backgrounds and dominant discourses influence the way such social interventions operate and impact on inequalities. Comparative research would be a great way to further assess the way in which cultural contexts and dominant discourses intervene with impact on gender+ equality. Within current Dutch (but also internationally dominant) discourses there is a tendency to conform to neoliberal and culturalist discourses and to trivialize discrimination. Comparative research could point out the way different dominant discourses interfere with a project's impact on gender+ inequality.

The last limitation of this study is that it only addressed sexuality and violence against women (the latter mostly in Case Study 3) in limited ways. Though violence was addressed in

some of the projects, that was mostly in relation to children and not women. Through my observations I learned that the projects addressed several issues that cross several domains (in the meaning of the term defined in Walby 2011; Verloo 2011), such as: division of care and work, (male) health, decision making. Sexuality and violence are also important battlegrounds of gender (in)equality (ibid.), and future research should pay more attention to the impact of interventions on these issues, in order to capture important ways in which gender inequality is produced and performed. As these can be considered quite personal issues, research on these aspects of gender inequality would require methods that probe more intimate personal narratives, while at the same time building a rapport and preserving ethical boundaries. In that sense the researcher necessarily struggles with similar issues as the professionals in this study.

As a final thought, I want to share some last considerations, both for social interventions that aim to engage men in gender equality and for research.

The project strategies described in this study (Chapter 4), as well as my critical view on them, can be used as starting points for developing intersectional (male) emancipation projects, which should also be mindful of local contexts. Instead of seeing male emancipation as either gender equality emancipation or as the advancement of men themselves, it seems crucial that we understand (male) emancipation intersectionally before we can reach (greater) gender+ equality. By intersectional (male) emancipation, I mean that emancipating interventions take into account the subjects' privileges as well as disadvantages; that professionals/organizers see the men, and see themselves, within their social locations and in relation to those who are (more) disadvantaged and privileged. Creating more awareness of locations and identities, as well as the dominant norms/discourses and their possibilities for change can create engaged identities that oppose constraining norms and practices, not only for the men who participate in group work, but also for other people in their surroundings.

According to Connell "any initiative that sets up pressure towards that historical change [toward equality] is worth having" (2005a: 238).[54] So, besides the studied projects, one could also think of policy changes that increase possibilities for paternity/partner leave and attention for gender equality in schools, also where boys are concerned (van Huis, Verloo & van der Haar 2014). It is, however, important to realize that aims that are articulated at the start of an intervention can fade, and that pacifying initiatives can prevent people from standing up for their own interests and those of other disadvantaged people. With these things in mind, anyone designing such an intervention should know that awareness of structural inequalities can support more engaged identities (which can still be peaceful) than pacified masculinities do. Disadvantaged men could become involved in political activities (with women), for instance, and do something about the injustices they experience. They could be involved in conversations with politicians who represent them (as in Case Study 2, where they discussed their own and their children's interests). Such intersectional (male-) emancipation interventions would encourage/facilitate disadvantaged men to join conversations in which their own oppression/disadvantage is related to the oppression/disadvantage of others, whether that be women or other minoritized groups.

[54] Connell uses the term "complex equality", which points at gender inequality across a variety of domains. Complex equality to her includes also the ending of the stigma of sexual difference, "the imposition of compulsory heterosexuality", and "reconstructing heterosexuality on the basis of reciprocity not hierarchy" (2010: 229).

Careful consideration of the strategies described in this study and my critical views on them could lead to more overt/frontstage projects that use tools and spaces that help guide conversations towards disadvantage as well as privilege in accessible and respectful ways using narratives that help de-essentialize seemingly fixed categorizations and inequalities When addressing (theoretical) privilege with disadvantaged men, it is specifically important to be aware that gender equality is not (always) a bottom-up topic. These interventions thus require professionals/trainers to be conscious of likely fading mechanisms and to choose strategies that prevent such fading without harming disadvantaged men in other ways. Such an intersectional consciousness is particularly essential to address gender equality in ways that are not normalizing, constraining, or stigmatizing, but instead are enabling and liberating for disadvantaged people, perhaps especially those who are simultaneously privileged along a different axis.

SAMENVATTING (SUMMARY IN DUTCH)

Het bevorderen van gendergelijkheid, oftewel gelijkheid tussen mannen en vrouwen en mensen die zich niet volgens deze binaire indeling identificeren, is niet alleen afhankelijk van wat vrouwen doen. Mannen hebben ook invloed op het verkleinen of doen verdwijnen van deze vorm van sociale ongelijkheid. Bovendien hangt het van andere ongelijkheidsdimensies zoals klasse en etniciteit af of mannen daadwerkelijk in een ongelijke verhouding staan tot vrouwen en tot andere mannen. Ook kunnen mannen zelf beperkt worden door mannelijkheidsnormen. Wanneer we die gedachtegang volgen is het van belang om mannen te betrekken bij het bevorderen van gendergelijkheid: in het belang van vrouwen, mensen die zich niet strikt als man of vrouw identificeren, andere mannen en de betreffende mannen zelf. Om beter begrip te krijgen van hoe zulke pogingen om mannen bij gendergelijkheid te betrekken precies werken heb ik 23 zogenaamde mannenemancipatieprojecten in Nederland onderzocht die zich richten op mannen die zelf in gemarginaliseerde posities zitten. Deze mannen hebben bijna allemaal een lagere sociaal-economische positie, veelal zijn ze werkloos, en de meeste hebben een migratie-achtergrond. Ik heb onderzocht wat voor invloed dit soort projecten hebben op verschillende vormen van ongelijkheid.

Maar wat is precies gendergelijkheid en ongelijkheid? In **hoofdstuk 1** van dit proefschrift leg ik uit dat, volgens feministische theorieën over intersectionaliteit, het van belang is om niet te kijken naar ongelijkheden die zijn terug te voeren op een enkele sociale categorie (zoals gender), maar om te kijken naar meerdere dimensies van ongelijkheid (in dit onderzoek: klasse, etniciteit, en gender) en naar hoe deze dimensies op elkaar ingrijpen. Naast intersectionaliteit wordt dit ook wel gender+ gelijkheid genoemd. Daarnaast is het van belang om dieper te kijken naar wat ongelijkheid precies is en waar het zichtbaar is. Ik maak gebruik van Yuval-Davis' theorie over "belonging", wat vertaald kan worden als thuishoren of thuis voelen, om een theorie te vormen over ongelijkheid, gecombineerd met theorie over mannelijkheid. Net als Yuval-Davis (2006; 2007; 2011) maak ik onderscheid tussen de volgende facetten: hoe kansen/mogelijkheden en beperkingen zijn verdeeld (sociale locaties/posities), hoe mensen zichzelf en anderen identificeren en zich gewaardeerd voelen (identificatie en emoties), en wie aan welke normen worden verwacht te voldoen (sociale normen). Daarbinnen maak ik onderscheid tussen structurele ongelijkheden op macro niveau en ongelijkheden tussen mensen op micro niveau, die in alle dimensies en facetten te onderscheiden zijn. Instituties zitten daar tussenin op meso-niveau. Deze facetten van ongelijkheid heb ik verbonden met theorie over mannelijkheid, waarin vooral van belang is hoe combinaties van privilege en marginaliteit uitwerken en hoe dominante mannelijkheidsnormen voor mannen zelf beperkend kunnen zijn: de zogenaamde kosten van mannelijkheid (Messner 2000). Gebaseerd op deze theorieën heb ik mijn eerste onderzoeksvraag geformuleerd: **Hoe beïnvloeden sociale interventies voor gemarginaliseerde mannen gender+ (on)gelijkheid?** (RQ1)

Specifieker beantwoord ik de volgende onderzoeksvraag: **Hoe beïnvloeden sociale interventies voor gemarginaliseerde mannen sociale posities, identiteiten en normen?** (RQ1a)

In mijn proefschrift stel ik verder dat het bij het onderzoeken van sociale interventies van belang is om niet alleen te kijken naar intenties, maar ook naar praktijk en ervaringen, en dat alles bezien in de bredere maatschappelijke context, om een beter begrip te krijgen van onbedoelde effecten op ongelijkheid. Methodologisch betekent dit dat ik voor het onderzoeken van interventies combinaties van verschillende onderzoeksmethoden voorsta waarin ik gebruik maak van theorie, projectplannen analyseer, maar ook met een open blik praktijk en ervaringen observeer. Zowel (kritische) frame analyse - waarin de onderzoeker bestudeert wat binnen een interventie wordt ingekaderd als problemen (diagnose), oplossingsrichtingen (prognose) en wat de rol is die verschillende actoren hebben (Verloo 2005; 2007) - als participerende observaties en interviews maken deel uit van deze studie. Het in samenhang begrijpen van de verschillende onderzoeksresultaten vereist een iteratief proces: een heen-en-weer gaan tussen verschillende soorten verzameld onderzoeksmateriaal, theorieën van anderen en de nog in ontwikkeling zijnde theoretische bevindingen. (In mijn onderzoek noem ik dat: *informed grounded theory*: Thornberg 2011; Glaser & Strauss 1967).

In dit iteratieve proces is Foucaults perspectief op macht en subjectificatie belangrijk gebleken om de rol van interventies in ongelijkheidsprocessen verder te begrijpen en om de interventies meer normatief te waarderen. Binnen een deel van Foucaults werk staat het begrip normalisatie centraal, wat inhoudt dat instituties (in Foucaults onderzoek onder meer: scholen, gevangenissen, de wetenschap) een belangrijke rol spelen in het conformeren van mensen aan normen die vooral de status quo helpen in stand houden. Subjectificatie heeft echter een tweede betekenis die schijnbaar een tegenovergestelde werking van instituties en interventies laat zien. Binnen instituties en door interventies raken mensen bewust van hun eigen positie(s) binnen ongelijkheidsdimensies: ze worden een bewust(er) handelend subject dat mogelijk verzet biedt tegen ongelijkheid. Ik bekijk deze schijnbare tegenstelling in de praktijk met de termen normalisatie en "*enabling*" (hier: mogelijkheden tot handelen bieden en een wens ontwikkelen tot verbetering). Ik onderzoek bovendien of er meer manieren zijn waarop we deze machtsverhoudingen en daarmee de interventies kunnen begrijpen. Op basis hiervan luidt mijn tweede hoofdvraag: **Op welke manieren kunnen de (invloed van) sociale interventies die zijn gericht op gemarginaliseerde mannen gewaardeerd worden als normaliserend, *enabling*, of anderszins?** (RQ2)

Als onderzoeksmethoden heb ik projectdocumenten van 23 emancipatieprojecten in Nederland geanalyseerd (tussen 2011 en 2013) die allen gefinancierd werden door een Nederlands fonds. Dit fonds ontwikkelde een financieringsprogramma voor "mannenemancipatieprojecten" waar organisaties op konden inschrijven. Binnen deze projecten heb ik 41 professionals[55] geïnterviewd en 35 deelnemers. Ik heb 3 projecten intensief onderzocht door middel van participerende observaties (in totaal 53 bezoeken). Daarnaast heb ik binnen 19 aanvullende projecten 49 participerende observaties uitgevoerd, variërend van 1 tot 4 keer.

In **hoofdstuk 2** laat ik de resultaten van de frameanalyse van projectplannen en interviews met professionals zien die aan het begin van de projecten zijn gehouden en vergelijk ik

[55] Ik gebruik hier de overkoepelende term professionals die in het sociaal werkveld meestal gebruikt wordt voor maatschappelijk werkers, trainers, opbouwwerkers et cetera.

die met literatuur over (Nederlandse) ontwikkelingen in beleid, politiek en maatschappelijk debat. De projecten zijn gericht op een combinatie van migrantenmannen en mannen zonder migratieachtergrond. Sommige projecten hadden een specifieke etnische doelgroep, maar de meeste projecten probeerden mannen van verschillende etnische achtergronden te bereiken. Dit komt overeen met huidige dominante discoursen over hoe er zou moeten worden omgegaan met mensen met een migratieachtergrond. Categoraal beleid is minder gewenst en dit is terug te zien in de projecten. Professionals benadrukken verder de sociale isolatie van de doelgroep (meestal in de betekenis van werkloos) en koppelen dit probleem aan het doel om deze mannen te helpen participeren in de samenleving (probleem-oplossing nexus 1). Dit doel past binnen huidige communitaristische neoliberale discoursen (Schinkel & van Houdt 2010), waarin werklozen worden aangespoord om hun "verantwoordelijkheid" te nemen en zichzelf nuttig te maken. Hoewel binnen de projecten problemen en oplossingen op vergelijkbare wijze beschreven zijn, verwoordden professionals deze veelal vanuit het perspectief van mannen zelf. De professionals probeerden ook de situatie van de mannen te verbeteren en waren vanaf het begin van plan te luisteren naar wat de mannen zelf wilden, wat weer past bij een egalitair soort paternalisme dat met name in het Nederlandse maatschappelijk werk terug te vinden is (van der Berg 2013).

Professionals framen problemen met gender(on)gelijkheid, ondanks deelname van (witte) mannen zonder migratieachtergrond, vooral als een probleem van migrantenmannen en koppelen dit aan "tradities". De oplossing die zij voorstaan is "(mannen)emancipatie" (probleem-oplossing nexus 2). Slechts enkele projecten zien dit breder en benoemen ook bij witte mannen "traditionele waarden en gedrag". Bij met name mannen met een Marokkaanse of Turkse achtergrond framen professionals problemen rond gender als mannen die hun vrouwen en dochters beperken in onderwijs en opleiding. Bij mannen met een Surinaamse, of Antilliaanse achtergrond is er een sterkere probleemdiagnose van machomentaliteit, losse seksuele moraal en afwezige vaders, waar professionals soms op een wat ongecompliceerde manier mee omspringen. In beide gevallen noemen professionals soms ook (dreiging van) geweld in de probleemdefinitie. Het bekritiseren van waarden en gedrag van vooral mannen met een migratieachtergrond past binnen een discours dat zich sinds de jaren 90 ontwikkeld heeft waarin er meer aandacht kwam voor de cultuur van migranten en de aandacht voor sociaal-economische positie minder prominent werd. Dit wordt een culturalistisch discours genoemd (Geschiere 2009; Duyvendak, Hurenkamp & Tonkens 2010). In het algemeen is er binnen de projectplannen weinig aandacht voor structurele ongelijkheden en richten professionals zich op het individu. Dit rijmt met huidige neoliberale denkbeelden waarin individuen verantwoordelijk worden geacht voor hun eigen welbevinden. Hierbinnen is genderongelijkheid alleen belangrijk waar het gaat om het aanstippen van afwijkende normen van migrantenmannen (Roggeband & Verloo 2007). Onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat in Nederland (maar ook in de rest van Europa) structurele historisch gegroeide etnische ongelijkheden, inclusief racisme vaak over het hoofd worden gezien. Dit gebeurt onder invloed van een a-historische neoliberale focus op het individu en discoursen waarin racisme wordt getrivialiseerd, tenzij het over WOII gaat (Essed & Trienekens 2008; Ghorashi 2006 Wekker 2016). De dominante discoursen die in de literatuur beschreven worden zijn ook zichtbaar in de manier waarop professionals doelgroepen, problemen en oplossingen benoemen en inkaderen. Er zijn enkele uitzonderingen. Zo is er een project dat vanaf het begin een sterk bewustzijn toonde van stereotype beelden en deze wilde bediscussiëren met mannen met een Afro-Caribische achtergrond, in combinatie met het bespreken en oplossen

van andere problemen die spelen. Deze observatie vormt een alternatief narratief binnen Nederlandse dominante discoursen over mensen met een migratieachtergrond en ongelijkheid in het algemeen.

Als oplossingsrichting voor "traditionele waarden en gedrag" van mannen gebruiken professionals emancipatie, of mannenemancipatie als centrale term. Dit blijkt echter een term die veelal alleen achter de coulissen gebruikt wordt: een "backstage" term (Goffman 1978). Op het podium van de projecten, "frontstage", in het contact met deelnemers, waren de professionals vanaf het begin bewust voorzichtig met het gebruik van deze term, en met het bespreken van ongelijkheid tussen mannen en vrouwen, uit angst om mannen af te schrikken. Veel professionals waren van plan om gender(on)gelijkheid te bespreken via het onderwerp vaderschap. Daarnaast gebruikten de professionals de term emancipatie ook in de betekenis van verbetering van de positie van mannen zelf. Hiermee vervaagde de term als oplossing voor "traditionele waarden en gedrag" die professionals signaleerden. Bovendien hadden veel professionals geen concrete plannen voor activiteiten rond het onderwerp "emancipatie" in het project. De verwachting op basis van deze analyse was dan ook dat wat betreft hun theoretisch geprivilegieerde sociale positie, de invloed op gender(on)gelijkheid beperkt zou blijven. Professionals hadden vooral aandacht voor de gemarginaliseerde positie van de deelnemende mannen en dan in individualistische zin: ze gingen mannen aansporen hun leven op orde te brengen, om vrijwilligerswerk te doen en ze gingen ze als individu, via groepswerk, het gevoel geven ergens bij te horen.

In het **derde hoofdstuk** bespreek ik drie case-studies. De eerste betreft een project in Amsterdam waarin een groep van oudere mannen met een gemengde migratieachtergrond wekelijks bij elkaar kwam om onderwerpen naar hun keuze te bespreken, activiteiten te ondernemen en persoonlijke doelen te formuleren. Veel onderwerpen en activiteiten werden echter ook door de professionals bepaald. Sommige mannen toonden interesse om de situatie in de familie met hun vrouw en kinderen te bespreken. Daar werd echter omzichtig mee omgesprongen en de professionals leken soms bang dat sommige gevoelige onderwerpen een positieve, aanmoedigende sfeer in de weg zou zitten. De tweede case-studie gaat over een groep vaders met een Marokkaanse achtergrond die vaderschap en de jeugd in de buurt centraal stelden in hun bijeenkomsten. In het derde jaar van dit project was er - op verzoek van het financierende fonds – meer expliciete aandacht voor "emancipatie" en praatten de mannen voorzichtig over mannen en vrouwen en relaties. Het verschil in opvoeding van jongens en meisjes was vooral aanleiding om over gender(on)gelijkheid te praten, en de rol van de vader in het gezin een aanleiding om over mannelijkheidsnormen te praten. De mannelijkheid die men voorstond leidde echter niet noodzakelijk tot een gelijkere taakverdeling tussen mannen en vrouwen (uitgaande van heterostellen). Het ideale manbeeld dat men creëerde was vooral een man die betrokken is bij de opvoeding van (ook jonge) kinderen en die onderhandelend communiceert en disciplineert in plaats van op een strenge, afstandelijke en/of agressieve manier (een "gepacificeerde" mannelijkheid). Soms probeerden professionals een brug te slaan tussen manieren waarop ze mannen adviseerden conflicten met kinderen op te lossen en manieren van met vrouwen omgaan: door meer te luisteren en te onderhandelen. Het schijnbaar ongepland en op onverwachte wijze inbrengen van het moeilijke onderwerp gender(on)gelijkheid noem ik in dit proefschrift "*slipping in gender-(in)equality*". De derde case-studie gaat over een groep jonge witte mannen waarvan de helft een achtergrond heeft als woonwagenbewoner. Deze jongeren leerden om een groep kinderen te begeleiden bij het doen van spel- en sportactiviteiten. Parallel

aan het programma namen de jongeren deel aan kooklessen. Dit was verplicht wanneer ze het andere deel wilden afmaken. Tijdens die lessen initieerden professionals gesprekken over verdeling van huishoudelijke taken (ook een vorm van "*slipping-in*"). Nadat bleek dat een aantal jongeren problemen had met agressiviteit en het oplossen van conflicten, maar ook vanuit het oogpunt van problemen met partnergeweld door mannen binnen de gemeenschap, werd er een training georganiseerd over agressiviteit en conflicthantering. Deze training ging echter niet expliciet over partnergeweld. Ook in dit geval werd er om de vastgestelde genderongelijkheid heen gedraaid en af en toe geprobeerd om het onderwerp bespreekbaar te maken. Dit leidde in deze groep nooit tot uitgebreide open gesprekken over het onderwerp: één op één hadden de professionals soms wel persoonlijkere gesprekken met deelnemers over problemen binnen relaties.

Uit vergelijking van de case-studies blijkt dat deze projecten in de praktijk vooral gaan over de sociale isolatie-participatie nexus en dat de onderwerpen "traditionele waarden en gedrag" en emancipatie (nexus 2) verder naar de achtergrond schoven. Hierdoor was er weinig invloed op de genderongelijkheidssituatie en meer op het verbeteren van individuele gemarginaliseerde dimensies van sociale locaties en identiteiten en het inpassen van mannen in dominante participatienormen en ideale mannelijkheidsnormen. Het verwateren van het thema in de praktijk heb ik zichtbaar gemaakt door vijf mechanismes te formuleren: 1) *afleiding* door het op de voorgrond treden van andere ongelijkheidsdimensies, in combinatie met een niet gevoelde noodzaak om iets aan problemen te doen die niet zelf ervaren worden, 2) de wens om een *positieve sfeer* te behouden, met het oogpunt op het behouden en aanmoedigen van deelnemers, 3) professionals probeerden deelnemers *te beschermen tegen stigmatisering* en waren bang stereotype beelden te reproduceren of hen anderszins verder te kwetsen, 4) *discrepantie tussen "backstage" en "frontstage" doelen,* wat het moeilijk maakte om de backstage doelen (gendergelijkheid) later ter sprake te brengen, 5) er werd soms een *gemakkelijke uitweg* gezocht bij een doel met meerdere betekenissen: mannenemancipatie werd op verschillende manieren gedefinieerd, waaronder de positie van mannen zelf verbeteren. Als professionals aan dit doel werkten hadden ze het idee voldoende aan "emancipatie" te hebben gedaan.

In alle drie de case-studies bevonden zich mannen die in het dagelijks leven en in het zoeken naar werk met discriminatie te maken hadden. Alleen in case studie twee werd er daadwerkelijk een oplossingsrichting gegeven die verder kwam dan "niets van aantrekken" en "niet agressief reageren". Dat deden professionals door het gevoel van verantwoordelijkheid te beperken tot zaken waar ze controle over hadden, in een poging de stigmatiserende werking van dominante discoursen te beperken.

In **hoofdstuk 4** bestudeer ik op welke manieren er binnen andere projecten wel over genderongelijkheid-onderwerpen werd gesproken en wat er in die gevallen gebeurde. Na een korte bespreking van een aantal situaties waarin mannen zelf het onderwerp inbrachten, toon ik tien strategieën die professionals gebruikten om gender(on)gelijkheid te behandelen. De tien strategieën kunnen in drie categorieën worden ingedeeld. De eerste categorie noem ik manieren om gendergelijkheid "backstage" en "frontstage" te plaatsen. Het combineren van onderwerpen en doelen (S1) is al een manier om een "moeilijk" onderwerp bij mannen te brengen die misschien niet op het onderwerp zelf af zouden komen. Vervolgens bespraken professionals middels andere onderwerpen gender(on)gelijkheid (S2), vaak via opvoeding, maar ook via gezondheid. Professionals blijken echter het onderwerp vaak nauwelijks, of slechts heel kort te

bespreken en de balans door te laten slaan naar het "frontstage" onderwerp, waardoor de invloed op gender(+)gelijkheid beperkt blijft. Ook heb ik gezien dat professionals genderongelijkheid als een probleem voor mannen definiëren en dat professionals met de mannen bespreken hoe dominante mannelijkheidsnormen voor henzelf beperkend werken (S4). Soms kan dit indirect ook de situatie van vrouwen verbeteren, maar dat is niet noodzakelijkerwijs het geval en het kan zelfs het gendergelijkheidsdoel doen vervagen. Bovendien bleek het in deze gevallen moeilijk voor professionals om verder te komen dan herhaling van stereotypen over mannen en vrouwen. In enkele gevallen bespraken professionals gender(on)gelijkheid wel expliciet (S3). Meestal waren dit professionals die hier al langer ervaring in hadden en organisaties die zich gespecialiseerd hebben op het gebied van gender+. Ook in die gevallen combineerden professionals onderwerpen binnen het project.

In de tweede categorie strategieën draait het om manieren waarop professionals gender(on)gelijkheid naar materialen, fysieke praktijken en lichamen vertaalden. Ik doel hiermee op methoden die gebruik maakten van foto's en vragenkaartjes (S5) en activiteiten zoals sportactiviteiten, kooklessen, reparatieworkshops, en vader-kindactiviteiten (S6). Die activiteiten waren erop gericht om specifiek mannen te trekken, of om ze in activiteiten te plaatsen die "traditioneel" als vrouwelijk werden gezien. Dat laatste in de hoop de mannen meer (en gezond) te laten koken, of om gesprekken over ongelijke taakverdelingen op gang te brengen. Ook doel ik op het betrekken van een combinatie van mannelijke en vrouwelijke professionals met diverse etnische achtergronden bij projecten (S7). Dit bevorderde het aansluiten bij de doelgroep en vergrootte de mogelijkheid om perspectieven van mannen en vrouwen binnen de groep te horen. Gender, etnische achtergrond, of klasse-achtergrond van professionals waren echter niet altijd doorslaggevend voor een goede aansluiting bij de doelgroep en het bespreekbaar maken van als "moeilijk" ervaren onderwerpen zoals gender(on)gelijkheid. Een opgebouwde vertrouwensband of het gebruik van aansprekende methoden is minstens zo belangrijk. In de derde categorie strategieën gaat het om het vertellen van verhalen/geschiedenissen die de-essentialiseren. Dit betekent dat professionals verschillen tussen mannen en vrouwen (maar ook etnische en klasse-verschillen) beschrijven als iets wat niet in beton gegoten is, maar dat zich met de tijd ontwikkelt en dus veranderlijk is. Voorbeelden zijn veranderingen in genderverhoudingen in de (Nederlandse) geschiedenis (S8), en persoonlijke verhalen van professionals over dit soort veranderingen (S9). Zulke "verhalen" spoorden deelnemers aan om op hun eigen leven te reflecteren. Ze lieten ook zien dat normen en gedragsveranderingen mogelijk zijn en voordelen kunnen hebben voor jezelf of voor een ander. In veel gevallen werden de gespecialiseerde trainers ingehuurd door de organisaties die de projecten uitvoerden om dit soort de-essentialiserende "verhalen" te vertellen (S10). Het bleek echter wel uit te maken hoe en wie zulke verhalen vertelden. Het kan als problematisch worden ervaren wanneer witte professionals met hun eigen verhaal zichzelf ogenschijnlijk als goede voorbeeld voor migrantenmannen voorstelden, vooral als niet eerst gevraagd werd naar hun eigen dagelijks leven of hoe deelnemers zelf tegenover gender(on)gelijkheid aankeken.

Uit het bovenstaande blijkt dat deze strategieën geen "*ten steps to success*" zijn, maar allerlei mechanismen bevatten die bijdragen aan wel of niet verwateren van het gendergelijkheid-onderwerp, en mede bepalen of andere ongelijkheidsdimensies positief of negatief geraakt worden. Ik heb gezien dat expliciet gender(on)gelijkheid bespreken, met hulpmiddelen en met de-essentialiserende verhalen mogelijk is en dat deelnemende mannen hier welwillend op reageerden.

In **hoofdstuk 5** komen de perspectieven van de deelnemers van de mannenemancipatieprojecten aan bod. Daarin laat ik aan de hand van interviews met deze mannen zien hoe hun dagelijks leven eruit ziet en hoe ze hun eigen problemen en ongelijkheidsdimensies ervaren. In vergelijking met professionals hadden deelnemers meer aandacht voor de manier waarop structurele ongelijkheden en maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen hun leven beïnvloedden. Zij ervoeren hoe de arbeidsmarkt in hun nadeel georganiseerd is, en dat er nu minder vraag is naar laaggeschoolde, of ongeschoolde arbeid dan vroeger. Ook noemden ze de negatieve invloed van de economische crisis vanaf 2008 en etnische discriminatie/racisme op de arbeidsmarkt en in het dagelijks leven. Dit alles verbonden ze (niet allemaal op dezelfde manier) met individuele gezondheidsproblemen, psychische problemen, verlies van sociale contacten door werkloosheid, problematische familiegeschiedenissen - inclusief moeilijke relaties met vaders - en eigen keuzes in hun leven. Uit zichzelf vertelden de mannen weinig over de manier waarop ze hun positie zagen ten opzichte van vrouwen, op enkele verhalen over moeilijk verlopen en soms gewelddadig verbroken relaties na. De mannen ervoeren de interventies als gedeeltelijke oplossing voor problemen in hun complexe levens. Hierbij stond een verlangen naar een zekere normaliteit en controle over hun eigen levens en naar contact met mensen voor sommige mannen centraal. Voor anderen waren vaderschap en het onder controle houden van jeugd in de buurt doorslaggevend. Er waren ook mannen die hun deelname definiëren als "anderen helpen". Combinaties van zulke ervaringen kwamen ook voor. De meeste mannen hebben niet ervaren dat gender(on)gelijkheid een (belangrijk) onderwerp was in de projecten. De deelnemers die dat wel hebben ervaren vertelden dat ze op het gebied van opvoeding hier meer over hebben gereflecteerd. Slechts in enkele gevallen zagen mannen duidelijke veranderingen in de eigen levens tijdens of na het project, bijvoorbeeld in de manier waarop vaders kinderen en met name hun dochters opvoedden (assertiever dan in vorige generaties), of het niet meer beperken van een echtgenote bij het afmaken van haar opleiding. De veranderingen naar meer reflectie op de rol van de man als vader in het gezin, of daadwerkelijke gepercipieerde gedragsverandering is echter niet slechts ingegeven door de interventie. Veel mannen zeggen voor de projecten al te hebben beseft dat ze op een andere manier vader willen zijn dan hun eigen vader: meer betrokken, minder streng en minder gewelddadig. De projecten hielpen hen om dit bewustzijn vast te houden en om praktische oplossingen te vinden voor problemen rond de opvoeding. Op de vraag of uitgebreidere gesprekken over gender(on)gelijkheid mogelijk en nodig zouden zijn beantwoordden veel mannen voorzichtig bevestigend. De hierover geïnterviewde mannen zeggen dat ze verwachten dat het moeilijk zal zijn en dat het afhangt van de manier waarop het gebeurt: het moet voorzichtig, met respect en vooral niet op dwingende toon, niet veel anders dan hoe de meeste professionals het aanpakten.

In **de conclusie** komen de bevindingen van voorgaande hoofdstukken samen en bespreek ik hoe de mannenemancipatie-interventies gericht op gemarginaliseerde mannen beperkte invloed hadden op gender+ gelijkheid. Doordat het gender-doel niet erg concreet uitgewerkt was aan het begin van de projecten en verder verwaterde in de praktijk (volgens de in hoofdstuk 3 besproken mechanismen), ervoeren deelnemers aan deze projecten nauwelijks dat ze met dit onderwerp bezig waren geweest. Via vaderschap werd er wel gewerkt aan de positie van de man in het gezin en daarmee aan een nieuw soort betrokken en gepacificeerde mannelijkheid, maar er werd nauwelijks expliciet gereflecteerd op hoe mannen kunnen bijdragen om de positie van vrouwen te verbeteren. Hierdoor werden de meeste mannen niet echt

betrokken bij het verbeteren van de positie van vrouwen, alleen op zeer impliciete wijze. Op andere, kruisende, dimensies van ongelijkheid, de sociaal-economische positie en etniciteit (in dit onderzoek het "plus-deel" van gender+), gebeurde er meer. In de sociale posities van mannen zijn er soms kleine verbeteringen in individuele levens zichtbaar: mannen die hier eerder problemen mee hadden brachten hun financiën meer op orde en veel raakten betrokken bij vrijwilligerswerk of oriënteerden zich op betaald werk. Mannen die zich in een sterk gemarginaliseerde positie bevonden voelden zich gehoord en verbonden binnen de projecten. Doordat de situatie van mannen vooral individueel en op het gebied van emoties en identiteit werden bezien en niet vanuit structurele sociale posities, is er weinig aandacht geweest voor de structuren (de sociale posities/locaties) die ongelijkheid bestendigen en werden mannen vooral binnen dominante normen ingepast, in plaats van bevrijd van beperkende normen. Er waren gesprekken over racisme/etnische discriminatie die ervoor zorgden dat mannen gehoord werden, maar die hen niet altijd hielpen om voor zichzelf op te komen. De uitzonderingen op deze observaties laten zien dat projecten waar explicieter op gender+(on)gelijkheid wordt gereflecteerd wel mogelijk zijn (inclusief de "plus" van etnische en klasse-ongelijkheid). Er hangt daarbij veel af van de kwaliteiten en ervaringen van de professionals en hoe zij het onderwerp frontstage, of backstage plaatsen, welke methoden zij gebruiken, hun band met de betreffende doelgroep, en of zij schijnbare vaststaande normen en beelden weten te de-essentialiseren en dat op een respectvolle, niet dwingende wijze.

Op basis van het onderzoek waardeer ik de interventies als gecombineerd normaliserend en *enabling*, waarbij het belangrijk is om te differentiëren tussen verschillende soorten van normalisatie en *enabling*. Sommige interventies waren *enabling* normaliserend en anderen beperkend normaliserend, afhankelijk van of de deelnemers meer of minder mogelijkheden kregen door zich te conformeren aan normen en of ze zelf behoefte hadden aan het passen binnen de norm. Ook waren er voorbeelden waarbij er *enabling* bevrijdend/liberaliserend gehandeld werd, wanneer deelnemers er zelf voor kozen om af te wijken van de norm - bijvoorbeeld mannelijkheidsnormen waar ze zich eerder aan gedwongen voelden te houden - en daarin gesterkt werden door de interventie.

Voor interventies voor mannen op het gebied van gender(on)gelijkheid betekenen deze bevindingen dat wanneer men een *enabling* bevrijdend effect wil hebben (op zowel mannen, vrouwen als mensen die zich niet binair identificeren), het nodig is om bewust te zijn van mechanismen die het onderwerp gender(on)gelijkheid doen verwateren (zoals genoemd in hoofdstuk 3). Strategieën om die verwatering tegen te gaan (zoals genoemd in hoofdstuk 4) moeten kritisch benaderd worden om ongewenste bijeffecten tegen te gaan. Bewustzijn van intersectionele ongelijkheden, oftewel een gender+ perspectief, waarbij andere dimensies van ongelijkheid ook in overweging worden genomen zijn nodig om niet beperkend normaliserend te handelen. Een kritische houding ten opzichte van dominante discoursen helpen om *enabling* bevrijdend te werken. Ten slotte blijft het belangrijk om van het dagelijks leven van de deelnemende mannen uit te gaan en ze met respect en gelijkwaardigheid te benaderen.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Topic list for interviewing professionals, translated into English

(Besides these topics and questions, professionals were asked to elaborate on target groups, problems and solutions formulated in their project plans)

Organization, project, background professional

- Organization (type, number of people, when founded, other activities/tasks, funding)
- How did the project originate?
- Target group
- Role(s) of professional(s) within the project
- Other people who are involved in the project (volunteers, professionals, organizations)
- Background: education, experience, gender, migration background, other relevant backgrounds. How for the others involved?
- First experiences? (when already started)

Reaching men and connecting them to the project

- How, what kind of people, why these? (probe to find out definition of problem)
- Who are more difficult to reach?
- How do you motivate men to participate? How do you keep them involved?
- How many men do you expect to reach? Will this be documented?

Funding organization program

- How do you understand the concepts used in the funding program:
    - socially isolated men (What is meant by this, is it relevant in the project?)
    - participation (What is meant by this, is it relevant in the project?, if yes: **how do you reach this goal?**)
    - male emancipation (What is meant by this, is it relevant in the project? If yes: **How do you reach this goal?**)
    - Is there someone in the organization who is specialized in gender (men and women)?
    - To what extent is inequality between men and women relevant in the project?
    - "awareness of the role in the family" (Is it relevant in the project? If yes: **How?)**
    - "awareness of male identity" (Is it relevant in the project? If yes: **How?)**
- What do you find most important in the project?
- Opinion on collective meeting with other professionals, including presented "codes of masculinity"?

Experiences

- Are there comparable projects you have done? (What are similarities? What is different?)
- What kind of support do you expect/want from the funding organization.
- Do you expect to continue with the project after funding stops? (Other forms of funding?)

Neighbourhood

- Do you reach people from this neighbourhood or beyond?
- What kind of neighbourhood is this? (first open, then: incomes, ethnic backgrounds, specific problems?)

Concluding

- What is the most important goal of the project?
- When has the project succeeded?

Appendix 2: Topic list for interviewing participants, translated into English

Background

- Place of birth, date of birth
- Family background (work, ethnicity)
- Places where one has lived, reasons for moving
- Education
- Work

Project

- How have you heard of the project and how have you decided to participate?
- Expectations in advance
- Practices in the project: what was discussed? What kind of activities? (what more)
- How often did you participate?
- What did you like/appreciate, what not?
- What did you think of the trainer? The other participants?
- Have you learned something new?
- Have you talked about your own experiences?
- Have you discussed (if not mentioned already) work, volunteer work, upbringing, Dutch society? What kind of discussions/ educational meetings?

Family, partner, gender & project

- Do you have a family or a partner?
- Did you talk about your family situation? (What did you talk about?)
- Did you talk about the project at home? (What did you talk about?)
- Experience with a group of only men
- Did you talk about being men? About differences and similarities between men and women? Inequalities? (If not: what would you think about discussing such a topic with a group of men?)
- Did you talk about upbringing of children?
- Do you think differently about fatherhood/ upbringing of children now?
- What type of father are you?
- How do you divide tasks (work and care) in your family?
- Is the relationship with your partner different because of the project?
- What is your opinion on the role of men and women in society and family? Did it change because of the project?

Every day life

- What does a weekday look like for you?
- Weekend?
- What do you like to do?
- Are there places where you meet people?
- What do you find important in life?
- Is religion important? How do you practice religion?
- Do you experience obstacles in your daily life?
- Do you have problems that you would like to have solved?
- Do you feel at home?
- Does the project impact: feeling at home and solving obstacles and problems?

About the Author

Iris van Huis was born in 1979 in Alkmaar, the Netherlands. She grew up in Castricum and at the age of 5 moved with her family to Salatiga, Indonesia, where her father was involved in a development cooperation project with the objective of designing a new Physics curriculum at Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana. There, Iris did part of her primary school at an Indonesian school and was partly home-schooled by her mother. When she was 9 the family returned to the Netherlands, where Iris did her secondary school at the Bonhoeffer College in Castricum. In 1997 she started to study Sociology at the University of Amsterdam. During her studies she also took interest in Cultural Anthropology and Sociology of Non-Western Societies; she graduated for a first year degree (propedeuse) and did an extensive minor. As an internship she worked at the Dutch Chamber of Audit (Algemene Rekenkamer) where she was involved in research on policy for secondary school children with extra educational needs. The topic of her thesis in Sociology was on Dutch civic integration courses for immigrants, which she studied from the angle of Dutch nationalism and social norms and which combined course book analysis, participant observations and interviews, resulting in a publication in Dutch peer-reviewed magazine *Sociologie* (with Ali de Regt).

After graduation Iris continued working as a researcher in several research projects in Urban Studies, usually related to immigration, while also working as a Teaching Assistant for Research Methodology, Research Methods, Urban Sociology, and Cultural Sociology. For one year she taught (Visual) Sociology at the Royal Academy of Art (KABK) in The Hague. In 2011 she joined a research group that studied projects that aimed to involve disadvantaged men in gender equality, which, by the end of 2012, developed into her PhD research at the Political Science department and Institute for Management Research, at Radboud University Nijmegen.

In 2016 Iris joined the ERC granted research group 'Bodies Across Borders in Europe: Oral and Visual Memory in Europe and Beyond' led by principal investigator Luisa Passerini, at the European University Institute in Florence. In this study she again takes up the topic of immigration, in combination with gender and visuality and immerses herself more in post-colonial thought. Recently, Iris has written about two topics: first, refugee migration; and, second, the ways in which the past is remembered and presented in museums and how these representations are criticized by activist post-migrant groups.

Iris has published in several peer-reviewed journals, has written for several magazines and blogs, and was one of the editors of *Sociologie Magazine* (2005-2011).